

THE LISTENER, APRIL 3, 1958. Vol. LIX. No. 1514

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Easter 1958





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## April

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# The Listener

Vol. LIX. No. 1514

Thursday April 3 1958

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## CONTENTS

RELIGION:	NEWS DIARY AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WEEK ...	580
Two Worlds at Once—IV (Gordon Rupp) ...	LITERATURE:	
THE WORLD TODAY:	'The Music of Time' (Walter Allen) ...	583
'Beware of Strangers!' (Michael Banton) ...	The Listener's Book Chronicle ...	587
The Ruling Passion (Angus Maude) ...	LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:	
Visit to a Moscow Synagogue (Emanuel Litvinoff) ...	From D. F. Campbell, Lawrence E. M. Rich, Isla M. Williams, Richard Mansfield, and Leonard Sourbutts ...	585
POEMS:	GARDENING:	
The Passion of Lord Jesus Christ (Hilary Corke) ...	Growing Campanulas (F. H. Streeter) ...	585
Hear the Bird of Day (David Campbell) ...	ART:	
Junk Shop Nude (Alan Ross) ...	The Greatness of a Minor Art (Quentin Bell) ...	586
THE LISTENER:	CRITIC ON THE HEARTH:	
Taking Stock ...	Television Documentary (Anthony Curtis) ...	592
What They Are Saying (foreign broadcasts) ...	Television Drama (Ivor Brown) ...	592
DID YOU HEAR THAT?	Sound Drama (Roy Walker) ...	593
Papal Audience (Patrick Smith) ...	The Spoken Word (K. W. Gransden) ...	595
London's Planetarium (Leonard Parkin) ...	Music (Scott Goddard) ...	595
Cigarette Cards (Dorothy Bagnall) ...	MUSIC:	
When Grandfather Retired (Andrew Douglas) ...	Puccini's First Step into Opera (Mosco Carner) ...	597
SCIENCE:	BROADCAST SUGGESTIONS FOR THE HOUSEWIFE ...	599
An Ecologist in the Falkland Islands (J. B. Cragg) ...	NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS ...	599
A Sceptical Chemist (Charles Vernon) ...	CROSSWORD NO. 1,453 ...	599
ANTHROPOLOGY:		
How to Live in Anarchy (Ernest Gellner) ...		

## Two Worlds at Once

# The Gospel for 'The Others'

The last of four talks for Lent by GORDON RUPP

WE have been thinking in the last two talks about rather abstract things, like traditions and situations. Let us get back now to where we began, to men and women, millions of them, who have to be brought back to the Church, home where they really belong.

A refugee pastor, Hans Ehrenberg, who went back to Germany at the end of the war, when it was a hard and uncomfortable thing to do, has written a pamphlet which he calls *The Gospel for 'The Others'*. In it he says that what churchgoers need is a radical re-direction of interest, through a whole 180 degrees, from themselves and towards those outside. And this shift of concern must be achieved by the Church at the practical, pastoral level, by the clergy, laity, and congregations, 'not by words of blame for the non-churchgoers, nor by cheap excuses for them either, but a real going out into their situation'.

I am sure that is already happening in more places and more effectively than most of us realise. I do not doubt that there are young men on housing estates and in tough youth clubs and live Christian congregations which are making adventurous and daring initiatives. Then there are the industrial chaplaincies which have behind them a growing body of thought and experience, and these are paying important attention to historical and sociological factors in the situation. And, of course, all the great Churches have special agencies which are constantly pondering and devising means of effective evangelism. Let us not suppose that revival can come only through the words of an evangelist addressed to mass meetings. For in fact in other centuries—monks in the sixth, friars in the thirteenth, reformers in the sixteenth—renewal has

come in very different ways. Even now, every year thousands of people are brought back to the Churches not by what it is fashionable to call 'evangelism' but by their own children, who have found friendship and happiness in Sunday schools, scouts, guides, youth clubs. That is an important clue, for it suggests that it is not so much talking as caring which is going to count, that people must know that we Christians are interested in them not as spiritual scalps to be hunted out but as comrades and friends who are evidently valued for themselves and not as a means to an end.

I am sure we shall need many experiments and innovations. Perhaps many things which loom large in what Churches are doing ought to stop and be replaced by other, more 'outward turning' things. But let us not think that all that matters is experiment and novelty, the latest ecclesiastical 'gimmick', or that all that counts is being done by the 'younger men' or the young people. For most of the time the most important work of the Church is unromantic and hits none of the headlines, and these essentials have varied little from century to century. In the Church of Jesus Christ it is always 'washing day', the old humdrum, everlasting chores of doing God's own grubby, dirty business, wiping away tears and washing away sins. The importance of these things cannot be weighed or counted, for in the Kingdom of God to bring peace to one conscience may count more than a hundred religious meetings or a thousand ecumenical councils.

So 'worldmanship' has implications for our churchmanship. It means that we bring our Gospel to bear on all men, and on



the whole of human life. It was a disastrous narrowing of the New Testament horizons when Christians behaved as though only a tiny minority of human beings were meant to be saved, or when they assumed that what 99.99 per cent. of the human race had been doing for 99.99 per cent. of human history had nothing to do with the purposes of God. As Dr. Maltby once said:

'Those vast tracts of the unbaptized human life we make over to poets and novelists and dramatists who explore them with inexhaustible interest and sympathy. Yet that interest and sympathy come from God who loves this human life of ours, not only as a moralist approving where it is good and disapproving where it is bad, but as a poet or artist loves it, because he cannot help loving a thing so strange, so piteous and enthralling as the story of every human soul must be'.

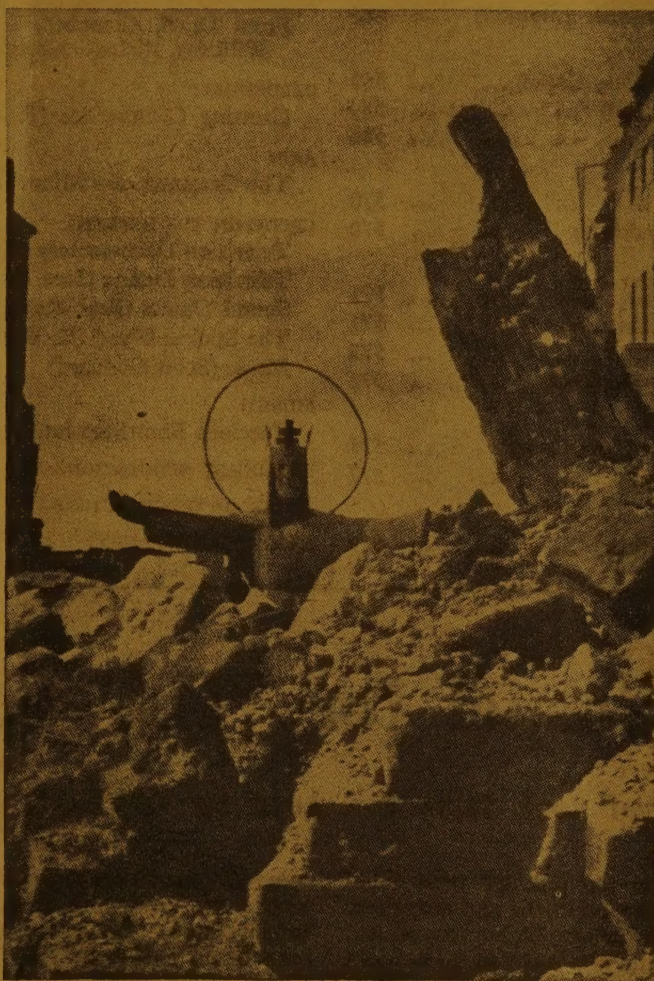
There is danger here, of course. Christians must not move away from a narrow pietism to a superficial broadmindedness. The attempt to attract the outsider by making churches more congenial and more comfortable invariably ends in dismal failure, whether at the level of the congregation or in an overall acceptance of the programme of a Welfare Church to fit a Welfare State. The truth ought to be that 'worldmanship' means greater Christian vigilance and discipline, for it means ceasing to please ourselves for the sake of 'the others'. And it means examining the quality of our own churchmanship. Dante spent his life in a great cause and died in exile because of it. He knew the importance of being a committed person, the awful betrayal of those who just sit on the fence. So when he wrote his *Divine Comedy* he put one group of people outside the pale of both heaven and hell—these are the people who were neither for God nor against Him, but were for themselves'. It would be better perhaps to go out of the Church rather than to belong to that fifth column of the half-hearted, half-committed Christians who have been the real weakness of the Church in every age. And if we are committed Christians we have to ask whether we live at a poor, dying rate when instead we might 'believe the maximum'.

A discipline is involved in our very love of the Church and what we know and enjoy in her, that true Christian patriotism of the Church. She has great possessions. Through twenty centuries she has acquired a treasure house of truth, beauty and goodness, noble prayers, liturgies, poetry, buildings, works of art, the lives of the saints. The very hymn books of the Churches are a witness that the Christians really have something to make a song about. Those outside the Church do not recognise these things or know their true worth. You do not need to be a Christian to admire the roof of King's College Chapel; and any teacher of English can make something of the poems of George Herbert or John Milton or the prose of John Bunyan. Yet there is something more. For the Church in the World is like Cinderella. She appears before men in the form of a servant, and only faith sees behind the rags those shining garments of a Bride adorned for her husband. These other things, these gifts of the Church, are like the glass coach and the footmen which appear to the outsiders only as a rather drab affair of mice and pumpkin; and among these gifts, highest among them are the comforts of the Gospel, those Christian perquisites so marvellously compressed in the words 'the means of grace and the hope of glory'. We Christians

who know and enjoy these things need to remember that they were not given for us to enjoy alone but we must share them with others. We must not grudge the wonders of the Father's house to our prodigal world.

Moreover, a great many of these things came into existence in the first place as means of communicating the Gospel, as 400 years ago new translations of the Bible, new prayers, new institutions of religion were made so that the Gospel might be plainly understood. If our Gospel is to come home to those 'others' it may well be that in our lifetime new forms of Christian worship and institutions must come into being and these may be as different from what we have known as our Church life differs from that of the Middle Ages. When we look at our Churches, divided as they are and so obviously needing blood transfusion from one another, we may well wonder whether this great creative task can possibly be done in our present state of division, whether in fact we must not find a greater unity, a greater husbanding of our common resources, before we can expect to get across the gulf and minister effectively to 'the others'.

I have been speaking so far of what is happening at various places along the Christian front. But we must turn from thinking about Christian tactics to remember what Charles Kingsley called 'the strategy of God'. Ruskin pointed out a century ago with what marvellous aptness the portico of St. Mark's, Venice, is contrived. He who entered the church at baptism looked up to behold a mosaic of Christ enthroned in glory. Then whenever he entered the church after that he would look up and read under the mosaic the words: 'Who He was and from Whom He came and at what price He redeemed thee and why He made thee and gave thee all things do thou consider'. The Church does not know and ought not to pretend to know all the answers to all the questions, but the Church does know the answer to these, the great, ultimate questions of our earthly existence. Everything else the world can say for itself rather



The statue of Christ the King, half buried in rubble, in a monastery garden in Cologne after the destruction of the city by bombs

better than the Church. But this it is supremely which the Church knows and must at all costs share—this news about God and what He has done for man, once and for all upon His Tree, and what He is now towards all His Church and all His world.

Helmuth Gollwitzer has recently made an anthology of letters of men and women who in the last fifteen years have died for their faith. In it he has placed a photograph of a monastery garden in the city of Cologne. A monastery garden—that conjures up a peaceful scene of quiet retirement far away from the bustle of the world. But this is as it looked on the morning after the great blitz which dissolved that city in a sea of flame. It is full of giant blocks of rubble, great boulders of charred wood. And there has fallen into it, by accident, and upright, the stone figure of Christ the King. He stands buried in the debris, which reaches up to his armpits, but none the less he stands wearing his Crown, Monarch of all He surveys, even though it is the worst wicked men can do; and He stands with his arms outstretched to save them—for King in the Bible is the Shepherd King, the King who saves, the Good Shepherd who lay down his life for the sheep, for the 'little flock' of his followers, and for the 'others' for whose sake also He did not disdain to die.—Home Service



## 'Beware of Strangers!'

MICHAEL BANTON on our attitude to the coloured people who come to this country

EVERY now and again we hear from different parts of Britain of incidents in which coloured people have been treated less favourably than white people, or of some other kind of minor racial friction. Many more occasions never find their way into the news for they are often difficult to substantiate: the cold shoulder, the superior stare, the vacant room that has suddenly been let to someone else—substantial enough to the newcomer in a strange country. These incidents give rise to the belief that deep down most Britons are prejudiced against coloured people, and that in time of stress such feelings are bound to find their way out. I believe this view is wrong, and want to outline another interpretation which points to practical conclusions of a very different sort.

But first we must clarify the notion of 'prejudice'. A hotel manager who refuses a room to a coloured man may only be obeying orders from the proprietor. Is then the proprietor prejudiced? He may exclude coloured people only because he believes it to be in his interest to do so. All that is certain is that the differential treatment of coloured people is a form of discrimination. We cannot even say that discrimination is necessarily wrongful, for with good reason people sometimes discriminate in favour of coloured persons; or discriminate against members of a minority group in the interests of that group. An employer, for example, might well believe that if he allowed the proportion of coloured workmen in his firm to rise above a certain limit his other workers would rough them up. Whether he is right or wrong in turning away coloured job-seekers beyond his quota is a question everyone has to decide for himself.

Discrimination, then, is a characteristic of behaviour, whereas prejudice is a state of mind in which it is an individual's feelings, impulses, or motives that hinder him from being impartial. Prejudice, in this sense, is a difficult concept to work with, for it is always risky to impute motives to people. Psychologists have built up a scientific approach by concentrating upon the analysis of observable behaviour, and enquiring into the factors associated with inter-group hostility. When two groups compete with one another each is liable to attack members of the other. This is direct aggression. But in some situations fear may induce the individual to displace his aggression on to a scapegoat—the opponent may be too powerful, or the frustration may come from within the individual's own social group and rebellion against it would be too painful. According to followers of Freud, all members of societies have to repress some of their individualistic impulses and to accept a degree of frustration, so that there is always a fund of potential hostility that can be directed against a permitted target. These theories have shed new light upon the dynamics of prejudice, but the problem of accounting for patterns of discrimination is entirely separate.

Prejudice and discrimination



Coloured and white undergraduates of Manchester University

are often found together and each encourages the other; but, as I have said, discrimination may stem from factors other than prejudice. Moreover, prejudiced people do not necessarily dis-

criminate. Someone accustomed to treating coloured people in an inferior fashion will mend his ways in a country where he knows that such behaviour will be disapproved or punished. On the whole, people give vent to their feelings only in situations defined as appropriate. The release of hostility, in other words, is regulated by social factors. I want to stress this sociological aspect of racial antagonism because the psychological and economic features that have received so much attention are only aspects of something much more complex.

The argument that colour discrimination in Britain is the product of a fund of hostility among the population never seemed to me to take proper account of the prevalence of benevolent attitudes towards coloured peoples; it assumed the existence of unconscious hostile forces for which there was little evidence. So in 1956 I carried out a survey of opinion in the course of which we interviewed 300 people chosen at random from electoral registers in six different districts in England and Scotland. This sample gives a fairly reliable guide to opinion in Britain as a whole. We had suspected that ordinary people are better disposed towards coloured immigrants than



Will he find accommodation?

Photographs: Hulton Picture Library



has been made out, but even so we were surprised by the rarity of hostile opinions. When asked whether, provided there was plenty of work about, coloured colonials should be allowed to continue settling in Britain, only one person in six was definitely opposed to further immigration. The great majority approved of their being admitted, though with varying emphasis upon the availability of work. Seven people in every ten thought that coloured colonials, as British subjects, deserved preference over European foreigners. Most people believed that others were less tolerant of coloured people than they were themselves. They had little sympathy with landlords or hotels that would not take in coloured people. But when we put it to them that in such situations people might be afraid lest their businesses suffered, we got a less clear-cut response. There seemed to be a tug-of-war between the belief that it is unfair to exclude coloured people without giving them a trial, and the view that business is business and other people's feelings must be considered.

The best indication of people's attitudes was given by a less direct form of question. Three cards had been prepared, each bearing ten statements. The interviewer handed these over one by one, explaining that they were the sorts of remark that were often made, and inviting the subject to indicate which, if any, represented his or her own views. Some responded fairly freely, others assented to very few of them. I give these details to make it clear that any statement endorsed by over half the respondents must command a wide measure of agreement amongst the nation. The four most generally favoured statements, starting from the remarkably high response rate of 76 per cent., were these:

Coloured people are just as good as us when they have the same training and opportunities.

A lot of the coloured people here are very clever.

If we all behaved in a more Christian way there would not be any colour problem.

People who treat others badly because of their colour ought to be punished.

### A Moral Problem

These responses, and the comments made by the way, show that most Britons see racial relations as posing a moral problem: that whatever differences there may be between racial groups they are no guide to conduct. Forty-five per cent. expressed opposition to intermarriage, usually because they were afraid the children would have to suffer for it; a few even said there was no objection to people of different races getting married provided they had no children. Others thought mixed marriages inadvisable on account of other people's prejudices. Moreover, an appreciable minority expressly dissented from the statement about inter-marriage; they thought it up to the individuals concerned; or that it was inevitable; or that this was a path to peace. Remarkably few people, only 4 per cent., agreed that 'the coloured people who come here are uncivilised'. Nine per cent. thought that 'all mixing between races should be avoided'. Ten per cent. endorsed the statement that 'coloured people will always be inferior to white people'; but seeing that over half of these accepted a statement saying exactly the opposite, it would appear that those who consciously believe in the biological inferiority of coloureds are fewer than one in twenty, and the proportion who are prepared to carry this into active hostility is much smaller yet.

We must therefore re-examine current views about the prevalence of latent colour prejudice in Britain. Yet if Britons are individually so well disposed towards the immigrants, why do they have such difficulty in expressing their sympathy, and why are minor cases of discrimination so frequent? The discrepancy, I believe, arises because in social life people act as members of interlocking groups caught up in a mesh of rights and obligations. Social behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the relationships in which it occurs. Some situations call forth the expression of sentiments which people do not really feel; others prevent people from expressing themselves.

Looking at the problem from this standpoint I am struck, first of all, by the influence of our imperial past in defining British rights and responsibilities towards coloured people. Fifty years ago the position was more clearly defined. Britons had gone to Africa and the colonies as the emissaries of civilisation. They were the rulers and the givers; coloured men were the subjects and the

receivers. Europeans brought the Gospel, the fruits of science and, or so our grandparents conceived it, European genius for government. Moreover, Darwin's followers in sociology saw Europeans as a race more advanced in evolution than Negroes and bound to eliminate them if the forces of natural selection were allowed free play.

### European Obligation to 'Pupils'

But because of his superiority the European was thought to be under a special obligation towards his pupils. European superiority and responsibility were the fundamental norms defining the relationship and cementing a set of customary relations acceptable to both parties. Relationships which could not be assimilated to this general pattern caused embarrassment: hence the colonial administrator's dislike of the educated African, or the African's uncertainty about how to treat the white man who did not play the role of the conventional European. Traces of this generalised relationship are still evident today. The coloured man who plays up to the idea of the 'poor darkie' can still do well for himself. A coloured boot-black, I understand, can do a better trade than his white counterpart. Englishmen who come into contact with coloureds of a professional status, like doctors and lawyers, are apt to be confused and sometimes resentful.

Nevertheless, the old pattern is no longer generally valid in this country. The immigrants are not now willing to play the role of colonial wards grateful for the mother country's benevolence. The Briton who perceives this change is thus without the rough guide to conduct which once he had; and people do not like to get involved in situations where it is not clear what sort of behaviour is expected. This is due not to a dislike of the other participants but to a desire to avoid embarrassment.

Here is a clue to one of the most puzzling features of the British racial scene: why is it that when there is so little discrimination compared with many other countries, coloured people should so often be resentful of British behaviour towards them? It is surely due to our uncertainty about the conduct expected of us. In Britain we lack both the racialist certainties of South Africa or the American deep South, and, at the other end of the scale, the almost complete acceptance accorded to racial minorities in Brazil or Hawaii. For Britons the old norms are invalid and new ones have yet to be arrived at. So we are inconsistent in our dealings with the immigrants; the coloured men find this all the more galling because it accords so ill with many of our public professions, and with what they had been led to expect from a colonial education.

What is it then that prevents Britons from treating a relationship with a coloured man in the same way as a relationship with a socially comparable white? There are two principal reasons, both of which are consequences not of colour itself but of the social significance of a dark skin colour in contemporary Britain. In the first place, colour is thought to be indicative of a low-class status, so people do not want to be seen associating with coloured men for fear that onlookers may think the less of them. In the second place, the immigrant's colour labels him a stranger, as someone who may be unaware of the customary modes of behaviour; people avoid relationships with strangers for fear of unwanted entanglements.

### Fear of Other People's Reactions

The fear of other people's reactions needs further explanations. People who live in Britain know that their 'class' is largely determined by the people with whom they associate. A dark skin colour, largely because of its associations with subject peoples, detracts from a person's social standing. This thesis, which was first formulated by Dr. Kenneth Little, has been elaborated in Dr. A. T. Carey's recent study of colonial students. He found that London landlords prefer white to coloured lodgers mainly because of their fears about what other people may think. One landlady remarked: 'Of course, I don't take blacks; I'm sorry for the darkies, that I am, but I know what the neighbours would say: look at Mrs. So-and-So! She really has come down in the world'.

However, many situations are much subtler than this. If you see a clergyman with a coloured man you do not think of this as a man's association with someone who is not his social equal;



you are far more likely to think, 'There goes a clergyman fulfilling one of his duties'. The way the situation is defined depends on the roles that the actors are thought to be playing, and a factor which contributes to the uncertainty of the inter-racial scene is that contrasting interpretations are often separated by only a hair's breadth. One girl who goes to dances with coloured students may be seen as having depraved tastes. Another may be thought of as doing a grand job looking after these poor lads and keeping them away from the communists!

Everyone is careful when entering into relations with strangers, whether coloured or not, for the stranger is the person whose behaviour cannot be predicted. He is the man who does not appreciate the nuances of situation or custom which enables us to exercise some degree of control in our dealings with others. But in our culture, the coloured man is the archetypal stranger: no matter how long he has lived in the country he appears, by his complexion, as much a newcomer as when he first arrived. Therefore the Briton extends to the coloured immigrants only a limited social acceptance. He fears that if he is kind to a newcomer the limits of his gesture may not be appreciated; he does not want to be confronted with a sudden request for help—which is all too possible when the immigrants have difficulty in finding work and housing.

Coloured immigrants have themselves commented upon the difficulty of learning the unspoken language of British social life. A Jamaican woman said in a recent broadcast: 'Here one has to learn to use words so that a situation—although it exists—is never admitted. For instance, if your hostess asks you to stay a bit longer, even if she insists that you do, you must understand that it is incumbent upon you to leave anyway'.

This reliance upon tacit understandings leads strangers to accuse us of hypocrisy. The more people rely upon our unspoken language to control situations, the more reluctant will they be to

admit any stranger who cannot interpret the signals. There is little difficulty in accepting coloured people in relationships which are regulated by the clearly defined sanctions of the law. No one disputes that the colonial immigrant is a fellow citizen, with the right to vote, to a seat on the bus, to the same public facilities, and so on. It is because there are no such sanctions to appeal to in the delimiting of social, still less of intimate personal, relations, that contact is avoided. This is especially true of inter-marriage. Legal sanctions are of only limited value to an unhappy marriage.

In studying racial relations, therefore, we are concerned not with physical attributes but with the social significance of these attributes. Moreover it is not only Britons who avoid associating with strangers for fear of what the neighbours may think: a Nigerian girl student, when asked if she ever went out with English students, said that she never had, and added: 'I should find it difficult to explain to my compatriots if I was seen with an Englishman—they might think I had a bad character'.

But my argument also has practical implications. When people attribute inter-group friction to prejudice they tend to regard prejudice as irrational, as something which, regrettably, will always be with us and which we cannot do anything about. But we reach a less pessimistic conclusion if, instead, we see social behaviour towards the immigrants less as an acting out of individual sentiment than as a response to social situations, defined by considerations of social status and tinted by our history as an imperial power. When custom fails and people are in doubt as to the correct course of behaviour, the determined leader can achieve a great deal for tolerance or intolerance. He can create the conviction in others that it is wrong to be influenced by considerations of colour, whereas if he hesitates and starts sounding others' opinions he will almost inevitably permit the least liberal to call the tune.—*Third Programme*

## The Ruling Passion

By ANGUS MAUDE, M.P.

**I**N some countries the term 'statesman' is applied as a mark of grudging respect to any public man who appears to be honest, while the word 'politician' is merely a term of abuse. It is hard to be sure about the ratings in this country. Politicians are often the object of derision, but seldom of hatred: collectively they are frequently referred to in accents of contempt; individually and personally they are generally treated with astonishing respect.

Nevertheless, we do not seem to go in much for statesmen nowadays. I have no idea why this should be, since plenty of politicians do their utmost to graduate into this estimable category. Some of them start making what are known as 'statesman-like speeches' at a very early stage in their careers, and indeed there have been cases of men who exhibited all the outward signs of being Elder Statesmen before they had shown any promise of being younger ones. If you went out into the streets and asked a sample of people what they thought of politicians, you would get a familiar set of answers. They would be accused of talking too much, of being afraid to be honest with the people for fear of losing an election, and, finally, of being 'in it for what they can get out of it'.

This last accusation, which might have been fairly applied 150 years ago, and has been true of local government in my lifetime, is ludicrously wide of the mark today. There are very few men indeed whose entry into parliament has enabled them to earn more money outside, and I would guess that more than half of the present Members would be financially better off if they left the House of Commons. This is, of course, one reason why the present turnover is so high.

What, then, causes people to become politicians? Perhaps even more important, what causes them to stay in politics once they have tried it? There are several reasons which account for

a minority of politicians: there are undoubtedly men who are convinced that being a borough councillor, or even a Member of Parliament, will be helpful to them in their business careers; although I suspect that these are nowadays more often wrong than right, and that they would be more successful in the long run if they devoted themselves single-mindedly to their businesses. To become mayor of a great borough is to some men an end in itself, and the road to this lies nowadays through party politics. It is even possible that there are men who are actuated primarily by the hope of being awarded an honour, although the Civil Service and local government service are a much surer path to this than politics.

But it remains true that the majority of men and women who enter politics are moved, to a greater or lesser degree, by the desire to perform some public service. Often the motive appears distinctly partial, for you will hear some of them loudly announcing that the purpose of their irruption into politics is to 'destroy socialism' or to 'fight the Tories'. Nevertheless, these militant politicians are for the most part thinking of more than the mere advancement of the economic interests of their own class: they do genuinely believe, however misguidedly, that the national welfare can best be promoted by devoting themselves to the harring of their dangerously unpatriotic opponents. It is, of course, only too easy to believe that your own policy is essential to the welfare of the whole nation, while that of your opponents is aimed at the selfish exploitation of purely sectional interests.

Allowing, then, that most of our legislators are animated by genuine motives of public service, how do they set about serving the public? Nearly all of them take a close personal interest in the affairs of their constituents, and make themselves periodically available for interview by those who seek advice or assistance



in dealing with government departments. This work is useful to the Member of Parliament in so far as it keeps him informed of the way in which social legislation (in particular) is working out in practice, but it often imposes an undue strain on representatives of large and sparsely populated country constituencies, and the work could in most cases be done just as well by the Member's secretary or agent, or in writing. Certainly it calls for no exercise of the arts of statesmanship; and indeed I think most M.P.s would consider that their public duties were comprehended under two main headings: their share in the general legislative business of parliament, and the promotion of the special interests of their own constituents.

However, I should perhaps add that there are some Members of Parliament who represent interests other than—or in addition to—those of their constituents; they are retained, either by direct financial subvention or by contributions to their election expenses, to promote in parliament the interests of coal-miners, school teachers, steel manufacturers, or other oppressed sections of the community. Whether or not this is a good thing can be argued at length. I think myself that it is a little odd to speak in shocked accents about the iniquities of eighteenth-century borough-mongering yet accept with equanimity the existence of modern pocket boroughs which are virtually controlled by trade unions, by co-operative societies, or by other sectional interests.

### Political Wheels Coming Full Circle

It is, however, gratifying to the historically minded observer to note how faithfully political wheels come full circle. In the days when England was run by dukes, pocket boroughs were much attacked, ostensibly on the grounds that they were an affront to the principles of parliamentary democracy but in fact because the attackers didn't much hold with dukes and with the power their property gave them. Now pocket boroughs are with us again; and if no one claims that they are a menace to parliamentary democracy it is probably because no one has got round to announcing very loudly and publicly that he doesn't much hold with trade unions and *their* power. Sooner or later, I think, someone will, and then there will be some very high-minded constitutional arguments about the propriety of pocket boroughs.

It is much the same with the power of the party machines. Although Sir Lewis Namier has shown that the power of eighteenth-century government patronage over the House of Commons was much exaggerated by historians, it was nevertheless a real power. Sir Henry Taylor, the distinguished civil servant who wrote *The Statesman*, was much affronted during the Crimean War by the parliamentary clamour against Lord Raglan and other military commanders, and prophesied that the abolition of patronage and rotten boroughs would make it impossible to fight a war with any firmness and consistency. He added that if there had been a reformed parliament in 1810 the Duke of Wellington would have been recalled in disgrace from his command in the Peninsula, which might well have been the case.

If Taylor could have looked forward a hundred years from the Crimea I think his fears would have been set at rest. For you yourselves could name—though I had better not—certain Ministers and public servants who since 1945 have survived failures and *débâcles* that would have caused Taylor to give them up for lost: and all because the machine has reasserted its hold over the House of Commons. So far from popular or parliamentary clamour being able to throw down discredited Ministers, it actually fixes them more firmly in their jobs; for once the prestige of the Government is seen to be involved, concession to clamour becomes impossible and the machine ensures conformity among the rank and file. Taylor quotes Sir Robert Peel as saying that 'the House of Commons is a timid body', and adds in a pleasant aside that Peel uttered this dictum the day before he fell off his horse, the point presumably being that the fall was fatal, so that this represented Peel's absolutely latest and final judgement on the House in which he rose so high and fell so fast.

Taylor's comment on this was to the effect that governments are often timid, too, but although this is undoubtedly true, they nevertheless manage today to control their back-bench supporters. This is done in a variety of ways, for the most part perfectly straight-

forward and innocent. Certainly committees of back-bench Members make their weight felt from time to time, and may secure modifications of policy and legislation if they are consulted at an early enough stage in the proceedings. How much influence they will have depends to a great extent on the character and personality of the Minister. Some Ministers like to take their back-bench followers along with them step by step in consultation, and to secure their support even at the cost of making concessions. These are usually able men who have acquired a thorough grasp of the subjects with which they are dealing. Weaker and less able Ministers are apt to rely completely on their Civil Service advisers, and will refuse flatly to modify the smallest clause in a Bill unless the officials approve.

### 'The Will of the Government Prevails'

In the last resort, whether it is the Cabinet standing firm on something which they regard as a major point of principle or a single Minister digging in his toes about a trivial point of detail, the will of the Government prevails. Normally a simple appeal for loyalty will be enough to do the trick; if this looks like failing, it is only necessary to announce that there will be a flight from the pound or that the Government will feel themselves compelled to resign if any substantial body of its supporters should either vote against it in the House or abstain from voting at all.

All this can be extremely frustrating for the individual Member of Parliament, and my own personal opinion is that Governments overdo their sensitivity to the prospect of defeat in parliament. I am sure that Ministers and Whips should accept with equanimity the carrying of minor amendments to insignificant measures against the advice of the Government; and that, similarly, Opposition Whips should allow their back benchers to vote on minor matters against the party line. After all, as far as the Government are concerned, they can always bring the matter up again at a later stage if further examination convinces them that the amendment was seriously mistaken, and impose disciplinary sanctions when it is reconsidered. This loosening up would certainly encourage active and able back benchers to participate more closely in the process of legislation. It might even improve the legislation, to say nothing of the desirable object of reducing the number of measures that actually reach the Statute Book.

However, I must make it perfectly plain that there is a large number of Members to whom the present situation is not frustrating at all. They are perfectly happy to sit for hours waiting for divisions the result of which is a foregone conclusion: or, if they are not perfectly happy, at least it never occurs to them that their state is lacking in either sense or dignity and ought to be altered. Government measures have to be got through, and conscientiously opposed in the process, and it is the business of back-bench Members to follow their leaders to that end. This, to many, is the ideal of public service to which they have dedicated themselves.

### No Room for the Individualist?

Perhaps it is not surprising that few statesmen emerge from this clutter of conformist politicians. The individualist is up against it from the start. The sturdy rebel can, and sometimes does, rise to the top if he is of outstanding ability and is prepared to wait a long time; in that case, he must have started young. Here I think present conditions are worse than those of Sir Henry Taylor's day, for he recommended that the aspiring statesman should actually have attained a minor office by the age of twenty-four—which was the age at which the younger Pitt became Prime Minister. This is almost impossible nowadays, and I suppose it could be argued that the much greater expectation of life today justifies the addition of ten years to Taylor's ideal age. Nevertheless, his model youth had been bred and educated to the business of statesmanship, having undergone an alarming course of instruction in history, economics, and state documents from the age of sixteen, and there was never any question of his having to earn a living outside the House. Today it is extraordinarily difficult for any man to devote himself consistently and effectively to politics unless he has either ample private means or is prepared to postpone his entry into parliament until he has established himself financially in another calling. Least of all is it possible for the



man who lacks the independence of an assured income from other sources to pursue an independent course in politics.

However, given a young man of means, ability, and a safe parliamentary seat, the remaining precepts laid down by Taylor 120 years ago still hold good. I am assuming that he is the kind of man who is anxious to become a Minister quickly rather than a baronet slowly, which is a decision that has to be made at a fairly early stage. He should, said Taylor, hold fast to his party, find himself a ministerial patron, and cultivate the arts of friendship and collecting adherents. He should be neither mulishly consistent nor imprudent enough to commit himself too soon to strong opinions which he may later find it embarrassing to disavow.

There are certain other warnings that I feel disposed to add on my own account. If he is eloquent, well-informed, and with a good, quick mind, he will have to be very careful indeed. If he uses these gifts consistently in support of his own party leaders and to the discomfiture of his opponents, he will do well; but he is likely to become strongly suspect and classified as 'unreliable' if he ever turns his talents to criticism of the official policy of his own party. If he ignores this advice and has the additional misfortune to be proved right by events, he will have to serve a sentence of meek conformity before he lives it down. Secondly, the aspiring politician would be well advised to refrain absolutely from ever making any observations at all about foreign affairs, apart from the most harmless *clichés* and platitudes. He can never go far wrong if he sticks to economics and the social services, which can quickly produce a reputation for soundness, especially if his knowledge of economics is expert enough to make him incomprehensible to the majority of his colleagues. But foreign affairs are very, very dangerous nowadays—and indeed I suspect they always have been. Feelings run high about them, parties tend

to split on them, and the ambitious politician who seeks a safe road to power will do well to eschew them utterly.

He may also—although I confess I do not think our experience in this field has been long enough to justify us in reaching dogmatic conclusions—be well advised to avoid prominence in the media of mass communication. To be suspected of seeking undue publicity in the press is to earn a black mark. Also, I do not think that to become a professional broadcaster or television performer is a reliable road to office. It secures the politician the appearance of great influence, even though of a limited kind, and is certainly helpful to him at elections, but it arouses both suspicion among his colleagues and apprehension among his leaders, who are never quite sure what he is going to say next and how much harm it will do. As a result, we are approaching a kind of dual system of political controversy, conducted on the one hand at the official and traditional level and on the other through the media of television, broadcasting, and journalism. Each has its leaders, its own dominant personalities, but they seldom coincide, and it is sometimes difficult to feel that they are even in intermittent contact.

To sum up, the aspiring statesman should not be in too much of a hurry. He should start as young as possible, certainly, but should take things fairly quietly after that. He should assure himself of an adequate income, cultivate knowledge of the basic raw materials of politics, and then beware of making too much noise at the wrong moments. Then, if he has ability and patience, he will get near the top. Whether by the time he gets there he will be a statesman, or whether the enforced compromises encountered on the way will have smoothed him into a professional politician, is primarily a question of his own character. Whether all this adds up to the best way to govern a country is another question still. But, looking round the world, it is possible to discern many worse.

—Home Service

## The Passion of Lord Jesus Christ

### The Passion of Lord Jesus Christ

It is both harsh and sweet:

Then listen all, both great and small,  
The tale I shall repeat.

Seven years with naked foot He has gone  
To save us all from sin,  
And forty days and forty nights  
No food has taken in.

The forty days and nights being up  
Our Lord full fain would eat  
Of holy bread, two sups of wine,  
And a pippin so sweet:  
And yet he would not eat it all,  
But has given his angels meat.

On Palm-Sunday Our Lord has come  
Unto Jerusalem.  
'Hosanna! Lord, Hosanna!'  
Cry all those Jewish men:  
Their cloaks and palm-tree boughs they cast  
Before Lord Jesus then.

Saint Peter speaketh to Saint John;  
'This is great dignity!'  
Then up and softly speaks our Lord:  
'It is great treachery!'

A day, a day, and three days more,  
Sir Peter, thou shalt see

My arms out-stretched from east to west  
Upon the bitter tree;

And you shall see my fore-head crowned  
With pricks of flowering may,  
And you shall see the iron nails  
Through hands and feet that day;

And you shall see the soldier's lance  
That cuts the deadly hole,  
And you shall see the red red blood  
That down my sides does roll,  
And you shall see four cherubin  
That catch it in a bowl.

My mother Mary at my feet  
Weepeth both night and day;  
And you shall see the bursten earth  
And riving of the clay,  
And you shall see the ocean burn  
Till all is burned away.

The stars from heaven you shall see  
Fall weeping through the night,  
And the red red sun and the white moon  
Locked still in mortal fight.

The Passion of Lord Jesus Christ,  
It is above all price:  
Who sings this song and thinks thereon  
Shall dine in Paradise.

Translated by HILARY CORKE from a sixteenth-century French *complainte*



# The Listener



BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION, LONDON, ENGLAND, 1958

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## What They Are Saying

Foreign broadcasts on world affairs

ON March 27, Moscow radio began its evening bulletin with the announcement, without comment, that Mr. Khrushchev had been 'unanimously elected' Prime Minister. The next day, *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* was quoted from Switzerland as saying that it took Stalin nineteen years to establish his personal rule, whereas Khrushchev has done it in five. From France, the Independent *Le Monde* was quoted as commenting:

The great change compared with the Stalin period is that this victory has been achieved with the spilling of very little blood, and that the enemies of Khrushchev are still in being, with rage in their hearts, but obliged to be present at his triumph.

Vatican radio commented:

Stalin has a successor and Communism once again has its chief . . . All remaining doubts about the need for the free peoples of the world to stand together are removed.

From Sweden, the Social-Democrat *Morgen Tidningen* was quoted for the view that it should not be inferred that Stalinism was on its way back. *The Washington Post* in the U.S. said:

There is no evidence that Khrushchev is or wants to be another Stalin. But . . . megalomania is a strange disease, and there is always the possibility that events . . . could make Khrushchev into a replica of Stalin.

Moscow radio, in its home and foreign services, has continued to dwell on the subject of 'summit' talks, but comment has followed familiar lines: stress was laid on Soviet concessions to Western views and alleged Western efforts to delay or avoid a high-level conference in the teeth of public opinion, while maximum publicity was given to reports of public opposition in the West to nuclear weapons and American bases. *Izvestia* contrasted the Soviet attitude to nuclear weapons with that of U.S. 'imperialist circles, which refuse to heed the voice of reason'.

The East German agency reported on March 26 that the East Berlin press was dominated by 'the disastrous decision of the Adenauer majority in the Lower House to equip the West German Nato army with nuclear weapons'. In a *Deutschlandsender* talk, Mr. Kroeber spoke of 'the most sinister drama in German parliamentary history' and declared that the next act would be staged 'in the streets'. The East German Communist *Neues Deutschland* gave a warning that Bonn's decision would lead to 'appropriate counter-measures' in the Soviet Zone. The Czech *Rude Pravo* claimed that the decision was taken against the will of the majority of the West German people and of the nations of Europe. It was natural, said the newspaper, that the Czechs, as neighbours of Germany, would have to take counter-measures. Moscow radio told its German listeners that the debate had not increased the chances of a summit meeting or of a solution of the German problem.

The Bundestag decision was welcomed in the American press. *The New York Times*, for instance, wrote on March 27:

Under the steadfast leadership of Chancellor Adenauer, West Germany has reaffirmed its determination to play its full part in the North Atlantic Alliance. At the same time the Bonn Parliament rejected both the Rapacki Plan for a denuclearised and neutralised zone in Central Europe and the Soviet proposal for a German peace treaty with a confederation of two German states that would leave the Soviet regime in East Germany intact. Both plans would take Germany out of Nato, which would mean the beginning of the end of that alliance.

Outside Europe, the situation in Indonesia has continued to be a major subject of comment. Agency and other transmissions from Peking last week contained many items, usually based on published official Indonesian statements or on Indonesian press reports, to show that the rebels were receiving arms from the United States via Formosa and to illustrate the danger of American intervention generally. Broadcasts from the rebel stations were poorly received: Bukittinggi broadcast a recording of a speech by Mr. Sjafruddin on March 19, when he said:

If Soekarno gets assistance from Russia, we shall not hesitate to request aid from anyone who can give us arms and any other help with which to maintain our resistance to Soekarno.

## Taking Stock

**D**URING the coming weekend the faithful will be attending Easter Services and churches throughout the land will be thronged with worshippers. On the other hand it would be an affectation to imagine that for the generality of people the chief significance of Easter lies in the fact that it is one of the great festivals of the Christian Church. The more usual view is that Easter makes a break from work; it is the first holiday season of the year. For many the joy of Easter springs from the knowledge that winter is over and summer (even the English summer) lies ahead. Yet whatever one's view of Easter may happen to be, the season can at least afford a period for reflection, for standing back from the preoccupations of our daily lives, and for forming some kind of view of the picture as a whole. Perhaps that is a tall order. Perhaps, too, the view, when one forms it, is not a very pleasant one. Consider, for example, the international situation—in as much as one can hardly ignore it. Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, the eminent scientist, was quoted the other day as saying that there are no 'nifty' solutions to the ever-present prospect of total war and total danger. It is one of the features of our time, he went on, that 'we live under the palpable threat of an apocalypse', but the problem is 'not only to face the sombre and grim elements of the future but to keep them from obscuring it'. One can agree with that—and be left wishing one knew of some solution to the problem.

Yet in this business of taking stock, one is struck sometimes not so much by the fact that the answers to our problems elude us (that, after all, is not surprising) as by the thought that anyone should really claim to know beyond a doubt the way to solve them. In the April number of that excellent magazine *Western World* Professor John Nef makes a point about the value of uncertainty. He writes:

All over the world today men and women are spiritually impoverished. They are hungry for kinds of certitude that higher education now fails to help them to find, fails most of all in those countries that have gone totalitarian, where, as under communism, the leaders claim to have a hold on final truth. Is not uncertainty the mark of the wisest men? Like Socrates they are uncertain, above all, about their own wisdom. Yet, perhaps, at the last hour—the hour when the artist has to decide, the lover to choose—they are more uncertain about their uncertainty than those who proclaim their certainty are certain. This higher uncertainty, which the search for wisdom can bring, alone could strengthen human community by the common faith it kindles.

There is no suggestion here that a man should have no principles, still less that he should be without a faith on which his principles are founded. But it is another thing for him, or for any body of people, to insist on a monopoly of wisdom, particularly on the way the world's affairs should be conducted; and when it comes to negotiating settlements one can think of worse methods of approach than a general acknowledgment all round that there may be something in what the other fellow says. Would this, one wonders, be too much to ask—seeing that a determination to work in such a spirit could well bring nearer the day we all long for, when nation shall speak peace unto nation and war shall be no more? Even counsels of perfection are sometimes worth a thought.



# Did You Hear That?

## PAPAL AUDIENCE

'IT WAS SNOWING in Rome—a very rare thing, the Romans told me, with a regretful shake of their heads—as I made my way across St. Peter's Square', said PATRICK SMITH, B.B.C. Rome correspondent, in 'The Eye-witness'. 'At the door of the great basilica a soft-spoken Irish Jesuit Father was awaiting me, to conduct me to my place on a tribune near the papal throne in front of St. Peter's tomb. It was a long, cold wait. At a side altar nearby, a young priest, assisted by only a handful of women and one young server boy, was achieving a life-time's ambition by saying Mass in St. Peter's. Moreover, it was on the nineteenth anniversary of the coronation of Pope Pius XII.

'Vatican police, resplendent in cockaded hats, capes and swords, strutted about importantly, hardly deigning to control the crowds. Crimson-robed ushers, with bows and knee-breeches, scrutinised the admission cards of those who still came. Then, with the snow fluttering down past the sixteen windows fretting Michelangelo's great dome, the Swiss Guard marched in, erect and solid-looking in their yellow and blue uniforms, slashed with scarlet, armed with halberds and swords, and standing round the throne in their ruffs and white gloves, as they have done ever since the sack of Rome more than 400 years ago.

'The throngs pressed closer. Around me, men and women were singing in many languages: and then, all languages became one, as they intoned the Creed in Latin. Suddenly, and with great effect, hundreds of chandeliers sprang into light, illuminating in all their loveliness the great mosaics of the dome and the cream-and-gilt roof of the apse, making the great sugar-barley pillars of the baldachino over the high altar look more improbable than ever. At the same time, flags were raised, and cries of "*Viva Il Papa*" echoed through the great church as the Pope, a frail figure in white, was borne in through the tall west door on the *sedia gestatoria*—a throne on a crimson velvet litter, borne by ten men. Before him marched a further detachment of the Swiss Guard.

'With both hands outstretched in typical Italian fashion, the Pope showered his blessings on the throngs who had come to his audience. He walked nimbly up the seven steps to his throne, turned and sat down, and spoke to all (with eloquent use of his thin, long hands, adorned only with the fisherman's ring), first in Italian, then in French, then English, for the benefit of a group of United States sailors, soldiers, and airmen; then in German, for more than a thousand pilgrims from Bavaria, who earlier had distinguished themselves by lusty singing, and some of whom cried out: "*Grüss Gott, Holy Father, from all in Bavaria*". The Pope smiled, and gave them his benediction. Then he spoke in Spanish to a number of pilgrims from South America, from Mexico, and from Spain, who clapped their applause at hearing their own language fall from his lips.

'The allocution over, the Pope then moved among the pilgrims. Many seized his right hand, knelt and kissed it, whilst he talked informally with a large number of them. Others—and I noticed the ample women of Bavaria well to the fore here—shook him warmly by the hand and spoke cheerily with



The Pope with a group of German pilgrims when he gave a general audience in St. Peter's on the nineteenth anniversary of his coronation

him. He laid his hands on the heads of young children, to whom he presented medallions from a large green velvet purse.

'It was all a strangely pleasant mingling of the regal with the informal. The audience ended, the Pope then sat on his throne again and was borne out of the Cathedral amid renewed cheering and clapping, followed by his guards, some of whom were bearing presents which the faithful had given him—crimson velvet embroidered shoes, books, and pictures'.

## LONDON'S PLANETARIUM

LEONARD PARKIN, a B.B.C. reporter, paid an advance visit to London's planetarium which is now open. 'Planetarium', he said, 'is to my mind a thoroughly obscure word which in no way really

explains what its function is. A planetarium is a device for representing the movement of stars and planets on the inside of a huge dome—a device, in fact, for putting artificial stars into an artificial sky.

'The inside of this huge copper dome, which has risen like a gigantic onion by the side of the road, is a circular auditorium which can seat more than 500 people. Round the base of the dome you can pick out features of the London skyline; the horizon, in fact, of the star-studded sky which appears as the lights go down. Music by Sibelius, Vaughan Williams, or Beethoven plays softly, and the stars shine down far more brilliantly than you see them outside your own front door when they are dimmed by the glare of street lighting, smoke, and cloud.

'The instrument which projects the stars into this cloudless sky cost £70,000. It was made in Germany, and it is only the thirty-third ever to have been made. It contains 29,000 parts and four



A section of the dome in the London Planetarium, Marylebone Road. In the foreground is the great projecting mechanism, and, above, a diagrammatic representation of the constellation of Cygnus



miles of electrical wiring, and the degree of error between the position of one of its projected planets and another (if you can imagine such a measurement) is said to be one thirteen-millionth of 1 per cent. The machine, which is driven by seven electric motors, looks rather like a huge back axle or a big dumb-bell, and it is light, shining through specially patterned holes in the big globes at either end of this two-ton machine, that projects the images of the stars or planets on to the surface of the dome. Together, the projectors can throw nearly 9,000 stars on to the dome: forty-two small projectors show the brightest stars in the heavens, and there are special projectors for the sun, the moon, and for the planets you can see with the naked eye.

'The commentator, from his control panel, has the power to control the universe. He can show you the Northern or the Southern Hemisphere; the rotation of the earth, which makes the stars appear to move across the sky in the course of a night, can be shown in a few seconds. The appearance of stars during the whole of a year can be shown in any time from twelve minutes to eleven seconds, and 26,000 years of time can be crossed in four minutes. The sky the Wise Men saw above Bethlehem can be reproduced—in fact, it is possible to show what the night sky looked like at any time in history, and what it will look like in the future.

'The commentary I heard was full of interest: the commentator was describing light years and the distance of stars from the earth. "The light from this star", he said, "which is reaching the earth now, started out just before the Great Fire of London".'

### CIGARETTE CARDS

'Before 1926', said DOROTHY BAGNALL in *Network Three*, 'there was no real organisation for cigarette-card collectors. There was no Cameric Club; there was no Cartophilic Society; there was no standard catalogue. The first real catalogue was issued in 1931. It was a slim booklet listing only a few hundred sets. Prices ranged from 6d. per set. Today the catalogue of British issues is published in two parts, each accompanied by illustrated handbooks, and the four volumes comprise some 500 pages and list approximately 3,000 sets.

'In 1933 the specialised journal for collectors, *Cigarette Card News*, was first published. The Cameric Club was formed in 1935 by two schoolboys; the prime mover was Eric Cherry, who later died in a Japanese P.O.W. camp. The club now has branches in various parts of the country which hold regular meetings where collectors forgather. In 1938 the Cartophilic Society of Great Britain was founded by my father, and many enthusiasts among the members of these two organisations have aided the work of research which has proceeded diligently since those pioneer days.

'In the early days many cards were not numbered, many were not named, and it was often impossible to find how many went to a complete set. So it has been almost card by card, with the co-operation and goodwill of an ever increasing band of collectors in many countries and from widely differing walks of life, that our knowledge has been gathered. The library is now an impressive one. In addition to the standard catalogue already mentioned, the *Cigarette Card News*, and the journals of the club and society, we have twenty-three reference books issued by the Cartophilic Society. Later books were larger and were devoted to groups or to a particular field of research—such as the *Tobacco War Booklet*—which covers the cards issued during the great battle for supremacy which was waged when the American concerns tried to corner the British market. This great "war" incidentally gave us many clues towards establishing dates of issue of early twentieth-century cards. The last book published in this series is *The World Tobacco Issues Index*, compiled and edited, as so many of its predecessors were, by E. C. Wharton-Tiger.

'The United Kingdom issued more different sets than any other country or group of countries, with over 3,000 sets representing some 121,000 different cards. On the other hand, Germany and Austria, with less than 900 different sets, led numerically as these represented nearly 150,000 cards, the reason being that their sets often ran to 200 or 300 cards against the 25 or 50 in common usage in this country.

'So far nearly all our attention has been devoted to tobacco inserts but these were undoubtedly preceded by cards issued with other commodities. We have at our headquarters some hand-blocked printed cards believed to have been issued with snuff in 1780 or earlier. Another treasure is an uncut sheet of drawings depicting various aspects of the Gold Rush of 1845. Apparently one R. Ellis, Grocer, Tobacconist, etc., of Hastings, had a brother who went to seek his fortune in Alaska and Mr. Ellis commemorated this fact by having printed these rough sketches with doggerel rhymes. With each ounce of tobacco he weighed in his shop (that was before the days of prepackaging—in fact before the days of cigarettes) he wrapped one of these pictures. This can certainly be regarded as the great-grandfather of cigarette cards'.



We bought a hole about six yards square,  
Half full of water, we work'd hard there;  
Nothing but pain and toil did we share  
At the Diggins.

R. ELLIS, (Late W. Ellis.)  
Grocer, Tea Dealer, and Tobacconist.  
HIGH STREET, HASTINGS  
Established 1806.

A card depicting an incident in the Gold Rush of 1845

### WHEN GRANDFATHER RETIRED

'Grandfather retired in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee', said ANDREW DOUGLAS in a talk in the Home Service, 'and he revelled in his freedom for twenty-seven years. He was a postman, and the day he stopped delivering letters he stayed in bed till dinner-time. My mother, who kept house, thought this almost sinful. "Bah!" said grandfather, "I'm a gentleman now, ain't I? I'm not a'going to get up in the middle of the night any more. I've made up me mind to enjoy meself. What's on the tariff today, love? I'm a'starving hungry". He had a schoolboy's appetite, had Grandad.

'Indoors, he sat, bolt upright, in a hard old Windsor chair by the kitchen range. He stoked the fire and filled the boiler with a water-can—the automatic filler had retired, too, years ago. He read

his newspaper with a relish. It was a radical paper; he was a dyed-in-the-wool Conservative. When his reading was punctuated by derisive growls, you could be sure he was enjoying himself no end.

'When he had digested his dinner and the news, he spent half an hour in contemplation, smoking his pipe in a shed he had built in the backyard when first he came to live in our house in a turning off Warwick Street, Pimlico. He never smoked indoors. He smoked shag, the kind that gave off clouds of white smoke. When his political abstractions were deep and his cogitations prolonged, his exit from the smoking parlour was dramatic. The patriarchal whiskers loomed first through the haze, then his stern eyes, red rimmed from the smoke, as he peered at the outer world.

'Grandfather grew geraniums from cuttings, and our window boxes always looked a treat. You couldn't do much with the poor soil, but his ferns, laurels, and Virginia creeper softened the ugly outlines of the walls. The fragrant white jasmine he had trained over the back door, too, turned a kitchen chair there on a summer afternoon into a seat in a sweet-scented bower—if you let your imagination have its head. A little oak tree, three feet high, stood in a corner: "A'grewed from a h'acorn", he said. There were also nasturtiums and lilies of the valley in tubs.

'He suffered with arthritis towards the end of his life, but continued to go on all his usual jaunts to the end, with the aid of a silver-headed presentation walking-stick. He carried this with an air of distinction, like a sergeant-major on parade. "Bah! Only carry it to please me daughter and keep off the dogs", he chuckled hoarsely. "I runs twice round Battersea Park before me breakfast!"



# Visit to a Moscow Synagogue

By EMANUEL LITVINOFF

**M**Y first encounter with a Jew in Moscow was inadvertent. I was trying to order a steak in the restaurant of the Moscow Hotel and my interpreter was absent. The waiter was a small, tired man in his fifties, with watery blue eyes that blinked nervously and a nondescript, exhausted middle-European face. He tried patiently and politely to understand my sign-language. 'I don't understand', he repeated over and over again in Russian. With some exasperation I looked round for someone who knew English. The restaurant was crowded with delegations, all furnished with interpreters, but those in my vicinity seemed to be mainly Chinese or Asians of various minor republics speaking a liquid babble of Oriental languages.

## Two Meetings

I had almost given up hope of getting my steak when the waiter had an idea. '*Sprechen sie Deutsch?*' he asked hopefully. I did, a little. He smiled with relief. Picking up the menu, he began to discuss the dishes in fluent Yiddish. I went on with my meal and gave no indication that I recognised the language he was using as anything other than German, but with the coffee I casually told him that I was a Jew. After a few moments, he looked round guardedly then bent over and brushed the tablecloth with a napkin. '*Ich bin oichet a Yid*' ('I, too, am a Jew'), he confided with his lips close to my ear.

My next meeting with a Jew occurred in equally fortuitous circumstances. My wife was rather unwell and our interpreter telephoned for the hotel doctor. About twenty minutes later there was a knock at the door of my apartment; a short fat man in a dirty white coat came in. His hair was cropped to the skull like that of many Russians and he carried a battered wooden box. He looked perhaps like the hotel butcher or a white-coated plumber; but the doctor he was, and a very good one he turned out to be. He, too, told me he spoke German, but actually we conversed in German-Yiddish while he carried on a thorough and systematic examination of the patient, unerringly diagnosed the cause of her sickness, and prescribed an effective treatment to remove it.

These perfunctory encounters were soon multiplied—Moscow is, after all, a city with at least as many Jews as there are in London. But these were not the Jews whose legends I had heard in the kitchen of my Bethnal Green tenement when my mother and her friends talked of Kiev and Minsk and Odessa, and populated the ghetto of their past with characters as moving and ridiculous as any Sholem Aleichem put into his comedies. Therefore something more than curiosity drew me—a secular Jew in whom the liturgy echoed faintly, if at all—to the synagogue, where I felt they must be found.

On the first available Saturday morning I set out to find the synagogue. It was not easy. Most of the people I asked looked at me as though I had made an extremely eccentric request. Finally, one of our interpreters undertook to make enquiries and was able to find the place for me. It was about ten minutes' walk from the Kremlin in a steep cobbled street, one of the narrowest in the whole of Moscow. The district was shabby by the standards of the Russian capital, which is a clean city comparatively free from the squalid slums of London and New York. Most of the surrounding streets were broken at intervals by court-yards hemmed in by tenements, with peeling stucco and lines of washing strung from window to window. Bright-looking children in clean, faded cottons played ball in the stifling heat, and women with broad peasant faces stared curiously at my foreign clothes.

The Moscow Great Synagogue was a big, grey building rather like a shabby municipal library. A crowd, predominantly men, stood or sat on its stone steps. Most of them were elderly, some were bearded, but all were poorly dressed as compared to the general population. A good many Russian blouses were in

evidence but whatever individuality there was in dress merged in the uniform drabness of the extremely poor. The people watched in silence as I approached, but when I ascended the steps some of the bolder ones crowded round and began to question me eagerly as they guided me into the building and introduced me to some synagogue officials. One of them was clearly the shamas—the beadle—a small, full-bearded, full-bellied man in his middle sixties whose face glistened with perspiration and whose anxious eyes scurried from side to side like startled mice.

It was a big day for the Moscow congregation, for a party of American rabbis were attending the synagogue for the first time. The service was at its height. The cantor rocked to and fro before the ark, chanting in a voice that alternated from a melodious bass to a dramatic tremolo, and a choir high in the synagogue sang the responses with singular clarity and resonance. The congregation stood shrouded in praying shawls, sometimes glancing distractedly at the faded gold stars in the blue alcoves at each side of the ark, the yellowed marble pillars, the grimy windows. A woman standing in the gallery cried persistently and beat her fist against her breasts, as women have always wept in synagogues. It was like an old print that recalls the whole tragic history of east-European Jewry.

Most of these people were old. There were very few under fifty: a man with tinted glasses, thumbing his prayer book with the devout concentration of a Talmudic student, two young men leaning against a pillar and staring round with the detached curiosity of casual eye-witnesses and, miraculously, one solitary small boy, following the service as his grandfather's index finger led his eye across the page. The two young men stood, negligent and aloof, and looked from face to face with a bold, deliberate scrutiny, as if they were committing everyone to memory. It gave me an almost melodramatic feeling of uneasiness.

After the service, when the Chief Rabbi had delivered a quasi-political sermon in Yiddish clearly addressed to the foreign visitors, one of the American rabbis replied. It was an impassioned address that would have been embarrassingly rhetorical in English but was warm and sincere in Yiddish. 'I want you all to know', the rabbi concluded, 'that your brothers and sisters in America have not forgotten you'.

## Poverty and Separation

All over the synagogue people began to sob. These tears of the old summed up the poverty, separation, and loneliness the Moscow congregation had experienced. As I began to leave, hundreds of people surrounded me, or, rather, we went out to meet each other. It was, in a strange way, like a reunion after a long absence. We were starved for knowledge of one another. When I asked them how things were with them, they replied: 'Well, we live'—with that wry shrug of the shoulders with which Jews convey an immense understatement. In turn they asked me endless questions about Jewish life in the remote outside world. How did the Jews get on in London? Was there much anti-semitism? Were they poor? Did people have Yiddish newspapers? Did many go to synagogues? What about the young generation: were they religious? How many synagogues were there? And religious institutions? Even more insistently they asked me about relatives—about sons and daughters in America, England, Israel, South Africa; about brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, old friends—and what could I say?

During this interchange I was suddenly made aware of the presence of the beadle. People became silent; some of them drifted away quietly. The beadle looked unhappy and ill at ease. 'Well', he said, 'don't you want to go?' But on the steps of the building I was again surrounded and the questioning was renewed with even more insistence. A man came close and whispered in my ear: 'I was in Siberia for nine years. Can you help me?' He



glanced over his shoulder uneasily. Encouraged by the absence of officials, other people began to tell me their troubles. Many of them had spent long years in prison or labour camps. For what offences? Again the expressive shoulder-shrugging: 'For nothing at all—we are Jews', they replied.

Somebody said hurriedly: 'Ssh! he's coming'. The beadle had appeared at the door of the synagogue. His face was sweating and puckered with anxiety. 'Is there anything you want? The service is over'. 'I was just talking to the people', I replied. But he stood there obstinately, his eyes begging me not to be difficult. 'You should go home', he said.

### Sabbath Guest

As I walked up the street a small, elderly man attached himself to me and in an undertone invited me to his home as a Sabbath guest. He wore a crumpled cotton summer suit, a straw hat with the brim partly broken away, and a shirt without a collar. He lived on the outskirts of Moscow so I reluctantly declined the invitation. Instead he offered to walk with me to my hotel. Seventy-five years old and remarkably vigorous for his age, he lived alone. His wife and two sons had been killed in the war, but he was evasive about the circumstances. In a disinterested voice, as though talking about matters that no longer concerned him personally, he told me something of the Jewish situation in the Soviet Union. I heard the same story from other Jews with whom I spoke.

He said that only the old maintained any connection with religious matters. There were no religious Jewish institutions apart from the synagogues, of which there were two very small ones in addition to the Moscow Great Synagogue, and there were the traditional religious gatherings which met in people's houses. It was unlikely, he thought, that there were more than 3,000 or 4,000 Jews in Moscow who maintained religious observances, and the situation was much the same in Leningrad, Odessa, and Kiev. Yet if Jews were not Jews they were not Gentiles either. A horse did not become a zebra just by having stripes painted on him.

After these disclosures, he lapsed into a friendly silence for a while. Then, abruptly, as if stating something that I could not have known, he said: 'Hitler killed 6,000,000 Jews'. 'I know', I said. He changed the subject immediately: what did I think of Moscow? I told him that it was a handsome city, and he seemed pleased that I should think so.

We turned into Red Square and strolled slowly past the splendidly Byzantine St. Basil's Cathedral with its brilliantly striped and star-studded onion domes that frivolously recall a group of exotic turbans. I thought inconsequentially of the remark my wife had made when she first saw them. 'What fun it would be to reproduce one in striped silk and take it for a walk down Bond Street'. It was good to be out in the bright, hot sunshine away from the depressingly forlorn synagogue. Moscow looked almost gay, soldiers walking with girls on their arms, whole family parties on a tour of the Kremlin, the children laughing and chattering, out-of-town visitors and foreigners clicking their cameras, and crowds round the soda-water stalls opposite the great department store, the hooting of city traffic as pedestrians scampered for their lives across the wide handsome roads.

Passing the Mausoleum, my friend said: 'Stalin's in there, you know'. He grinned as if it was a huge joke and, coming closer, whispered: 'A terrible anti-semitite'. But Lenin? 'A great and good man'. At the door of my hotel he wished me a hurried 'good Sabbath' and disappeared.

### Poorest of the Poor

The next morning I returned to the synagogue. About twenty people stood about round its entrance, several of whom I recognised. Their appearance shocked me. I had noticed the day before how poorly they were clothed; now I realised that they had been dressed in their best Sabbath clothes. The garments they wore now could have been picked out of refuse bins. There were old women wearing men's ragged jackets with only a frayed vest underneath. One ancient had her feet wrapped in rags. There were bearded men in wretched, worn-out military tunics. But some of them were not so old, and several were certainly under fifty.

These people were the driftwood of Moscow, the poorest of the poor. A good many of them had spent years in Siberian camps. Among the people I talked with was the woman who had wept throughout the Sabbath morning service. She had spent six years in prison, she said. Her home had been in Odessa. Why had she been in gaol? Well, she explained, she had been a cleaner in the synagogue there, and all synagogue workers were arrested.

A youngish man, whom I took to be about forty, joined in the conversation. He was a well-set-up fellow with a swarthy, aggressive face, dressed like a prosperous Russian worker. He could have been a mechanic, a construction worker or a truck-driver, proletarian from the soles of his high Russian boots to his flat cap. In fact, he seemed out of place in the synagogue. In a practised argumentative manner he told me he had been to Germany, Austria, and Israel, but came back to the Soviet Union because it was the only country worth living in.

'You came back from Israel?' I asked. 'To Russia?'

'Certainly', he replied. 'In Israel the workers' conditions were terrible, they were exploited by the capitalists and were short of food'.

I had been to Israel only a few weeks earlier, I said, and although Israel had its difficulties, working conditions compared very favourably with those of other countries, particularly the Soviet Union. 'That's what you say', the man replied with a sceptical grin. 'But I'm a worker', he added pugnaciously, extending his open palms to show the callouses. 'I know'.

### The Impatient Beadle

Suddenly the beadle was there again. 'What's going on?' he asked anxiously. 'What are they saying?' With careful neutrality, someone re-stated the main points of the discussion, and the beadle looked even more worried. He urged me gently towards the exit. The usual crowd waited. One very old lady, as shabbily dressed as the rest, asked me: 'How is it with the Jews in England?' She nodded her head slowly at my reply. 'Well, as long as they live . . .'. A man drew me aside and wanted to know if there was any way he could get to Israel; others gave me names of relatives with whom they had lost touch.

While we were talking the beadle reappeared. 'Why don't you go?' he asked. I ignored him. He motioned towards the top of the street, almost imploring me not to make his life difficult. 'Go, friend, go', he repeated.

'Why do you keep pushing me away every time I come here? I'm just talking to these people'.

'They're not sensible people', he mumbled. 'They only talk foolishness'. We stared obstinately at one another. I was sorry for him, he was so evidently a frightened man carrying out an unpleasant duty; but he refused to budge. It was impossible to talk to anybody in the circumstances, so I left.

As I made my way up the street someone followed. 'Don't walk so fast', he muttered with his head down. 'A Jew wants to have a few words with you'. I slowed my pace and felt an apologetic touch on my arm. It was a small, middle-aged man who had been in the synagogue but who had taken no part in the conversation. He was a fairly prosperous person with the look of an intellectual, wearing a dark, well-made business suit, a spotlessly clean white shirt with a neat grey striped tie, and could have been an executive in a big state concern. He was, as I found out, a man of some position. For the purposes of this narrative let us call him Mischa.

Mischa explained that he wanted to talk to me so that Jews outside the Soviet Union should know how their fellow-Jews in Russia were living. He himself was not a strictly orthodox Jew because it was frankly difficult to maintain religious observances, but his parents had been devout and he had been brought up with a deep respect for Judaism.

I asked him if there had been any change in conditions since the death of Stalin. He reflected carefully before replying. Finally, he said: 'Things are much better everywhere. But in the synagogues it is worse'. 'What do you mean, worse?' 'People are afraid'. He glanced round apprehensively. I myself had found more fear in the synagogue than outside, where I had often been agreeably surprised at the freedom with which people spoke. In many ways, the synagogue had a captive congregation. For those Jews unable to work through age, feebleness, or the lack of suit-



able papers, it was a place where they could receive occasional charitable dispensations. And, perhaps most important of all, in view of the great age of most members of the congregation, where else could they be assured of a Jewish burial?

Mischa told me many things about the Soviet Union, much of it far from pessimistic. He had travelled extensively throughout the country and reported great improvements in conditions since the death of Stalin. Freedom was definitely being enlarged and more consumer goods were reaching the markets. 'There is less claustrophobia now', he said. I gathered that he himself had no desire to leave Russia, and would certainly not emigrate to Israel. 'What would I do there?' he asked. 'I'm too old to change my ways'. He had only one favour to ask of me. A cousin of his in America was very wealthy and had written some time before offering to send Mischa or his wife some clothes, but Mischa had been afraid to reply. Would I take a letter for him and

post it from London? Naturally I offered to do so and we arranged a meeting outside my hotel.

He failed to turn up. I waited twenty minutes and finally gave up. Later he telephoned, a hurried nervous conversation about some misunderstanding over the time of our appointment, and we made another one. Again he was not there, and again he telephoned. But he failed to appear for the third appointment and I heard nothing more from him.

One day one of our interpreters said: 'I heard you visited the synagogue. I've never been there myself. What was it like?' She was an intelligent girl with a warm, lively personality, who had always been remarkably frank in our talk about Soviet life. I told her exactly what I had found. Dismayed, she said: 'I must go there and see it. But I'm sure of one thing: our Soviet leaders don't know about it...'

I do not doubt she was sincere.—*Third Programme*

## An Ecologist in the Falkland Islands

By J. B. CRAGG

**M**Y childhood idea that people in the southern hemisphere lived upside-down came back to me when I recently visited the Falklands. For in these islands I discovered a British community which, for the most part, treats an edible goose as vermin and uses the carcasses of cattle and sheep for fertiliser, or, as often appears to be the case, simply leaves the carcasses lying round to be dealt with by the black-backed Dominican gulls and the Falkland skuas. These features, which strike the visitor as odd, are no more than the extreme manifestations of an economy based not just on sheep but on the production of wool.

These islands, with a total area somewhat more than half of that of Wales, have a population less than that of many an English village, for there are only 2,400 inhabitants, of whom over half live in the capital, Port Stanley. They endure a tough climate, and their treeless and, more often than not, windswept landscapes have rarely been greeted with delight by the occasional visitor. When the *Rattlesnake* called there, admittedly in mid-winter, the famous Victorian biologist, T. H. Huxley, wrote: 'It is the Ultima Thule, and no mistake'.

There have been no sudden upheavals in the number of permanent inhabitants since the beginning of this century, when



Tussock grass on one of the smaller islands of the Falkland group, where it has not been reduced by sheep grazing



Rounding up sheep in the Falkland Islands

the 2,000 mark was reached. But if the human population has remained small, its effect on the animal inhabitants in the course of 200 years of occupation has been extensive.

Without any large herbivore of their own, the grazing history of the Falklands started with the introduction of animals from Europe. Not quite 200 years ago, seven heifers and two young bulls, eight sows, two boars, a few sheep, a kid, two horses and one mare were landed on the Falklands. Other colonists added to these meagre beginnings. Some eighty years later there was a wild-cattle population of 80,000 head. These animals were of no mean size. Darwin, who camped on the islands when the *Beagle* called there, was struck by the appearance of the animals, for he says, 'I never saw such magnificent beasts'.

The figure of about 80,000 reached just over a century ago represents the turning point in the history of wild cattle. By that time the first sheep farmers had arrived, and soon there were more than 7,000 sheep. The march of the sheep continued and by the end of the century they reached their peak, exceeding 800,000, and only remnants of the cattle herds remained. Broadly



speaking, the rise and extension of sheep farming in the Falklands paralleled the extension of hill farming into the Scottish Highlands. The spread northwards of the sheep rancher started in the seventeen-seventies, and reached its maximum development some twenty-five years before the maximum numbers were reached in the Falklands. In that twenty-five-year period, the prosperity of much of the Highlands declined.

When a Government White Paper apports blame, it usually does so with a weather eye on the kind of public outcry that might follow even the gentlest school-marm's scolding. *The Report of the Committee on Hill Sheep Farming in Scotland*, published in 1944, did not mince its words. It pointed out that:

The first prosperous phase of hill sheep farming, particularly in the Highlands, was undoubtedly a period of 'extractive' farming, and as has so often happened with modern agricultural exploitation of virgin lands, realisation of the evil results of purely extractive farming came too late.

These words might apply equally well to the state of affairs in the Falklands, where vegetation-cover on poor soils has been exploited to produce about 2,000 tons of wool a year. Apart from the fields in the immediate neighbourhood of some sheep stations which have received fertiliser, or at least the ploughed-in remains of sheep and cattle, nothing has been returned to the more widely scattered grazing areas. This is similar to the situation which exists at present over the hill-grazings of Britain. In both countries burning is a major feature, usually the only feature of grazing management, and its purpose is to destroy the lank, inedible vegetation left by the sheep. In the long run, burning, linked with uncontrolled grazing, is going to degrade a herbage.

The Falkland Islands have been visited by giants in the world of natural history, not least among them the great botanist, J. D. Hooker, who spent six months in the islands when a member of the Antarctic expedition led by Sir James Clarke Ross. In Hooker's day, tussock grass was luxurious on the smaller islands and formed a broad fringe round the major ones. This highly nutritious grass is one of the wonders of the biological world. Tussock remains on the smaller islands, but its distribution elsewhere has been seriously reduced, a result in the main of the sheep, for it appears to withstand cattle and horse grazing. I was introduced to tussock on Kidney Island, and to force one's way along the winding alleys between growths of tussock reaching well above one's own height was certainly a new experience.

That all is not well with the Falklands and their sheep is generally conceded. In 1937 and 1938, William Davies, then of the Welsh Plant Breeding Station, made a survey of the islands, and his careful and stimulating report confirmed that the grazing areas were degenerating. He saw the cure in the use of fertilisers, the re-seeding of large areas with more nutritive species, a greater sub-division of the land by fences, and an increase in the carrying capacity by controlled grazing.

Superficially the problem is closely similar to that of the West Highlands so ably investigated by Fraser Darling. The underlying feature is the same in both, an extension of sheep farming as an extractive process into a marginal area. In both cases, the monoculture of sheep has replaced cattle or a mixed cattle-sheep system of grazing. The points of difference are worth noting. In the Highlands the sheep prospered on land which, in previous centuries, had been forested. They were to a considerable extent living

on the capital of the previous tree cover. There has never been a tree cover in the Falklands. On the human side, the West Highland problem was one of many smallholdings, a system of subsistence farming. In the Falklands, farms are large; they vary in size from about 3,500 acres to more than 160,000, and are more able to meet periods of financial stress.

In the West Highlands, the regeneration of the land, and with it the revival of new hopes for its inhabitants, was viewed from an ecological point of view. In the proposals which were put forward a plea was made for what the ecologist terms a multi-purpose land-use policy. And figuring largely in that policy was a large degree of afforestation and a revival of cattle grazing with some reduction in sheep numbers. It must be admitted that the production of timber as an economic crop in the Falklands is not a hopeful proposition. The minimum requirement given for tree growth (and I mean tree growth, not the production of scrub) is usually regarded as two months in the year with an average temperature of at least fifty degrees Fahrenheit. Even where such conditions prevail, the trees must

be given some protection against wind and waterlogged soil.

I am very familiar with one site in Britain, the Nature Conservancy National Reserve, Moor House, a large stretch of treeless Pennine moorland which bears a superficial resemblance to the Falkland Island scene. Experimental plots of trees are now being established there, one of them at about 1,900 feet. But bleak and forbidding as Moor House can be, its July and August



A sheep rancher's house on West Falkland

average temperatures reach fifty-two degrees Fahrenheit, whereas average summer temperatures in the Falklands reach only forty-eight degrees Fahrenheit. It is too much to hope that extensive afforestation can be carried out under such conditions. However, where the local climate will allow it, some planting, even if only to produce scrub woodland, would help to rest small areas and provide shelter for stock.

To the biologist, the advance of the sheep has meant more than a change in the herbage of the islands. Wild animals have also been affected. The upland goose, for example, is looked upon as a pest because it eats grass which should be kept for sheep. The greatest loss has been the disappearance of the Falkland Island fox, variously described as dog or wolf. Darwin forecast that, like the Dodo, it was doomed to disappear, and by the end of the nineteenth century he had been proved right.

This fox represents more than just another lost species. Darwin pondered on how such a small set of isolated islands came to possess such a large carnivore. In his notebooks of 1835, from which excerpts were published for the first time about twelve years ago, it is evident that the differences which he had been told existed between East Falkland and West Falkland foxes were among the facts which first brought him to express doubts about the stability of species. There is another story that should be told about this animal. Boyson in his book on the Falkland Islands refers to unpublished manuscripts covering the voyages of H.M.S. *Welfare*. Richard Simson, who was on board, wrote of the fox:

As to their antiquity since they cannot fly at all, nor likely swime so farr as from America . . . there has been either two distinct Creations, or yt America and yt Island have been formed from the same Continent, which is the more probable of the two by farr.

That was written more than 100 years before Charles Darwin was born.



A community living on the proceeds of one animal is carrying on a dangerous gamble. A drop in the price of wool and many people in the Falklands would suffer. Attempts have been made in the post-war years to broaden the basis of the islands' economy. Unfortunately, more than £500,000 spent on a refrigerator plant and more than £160,000 on a sealing industry have come to naught. So that for some time the islanders must depend on their sheep, even if in the eyes of the ecologist the monoculture of sheep is carrying with it the seeds of its own destruction.

The Falklands represent a small but nevertheless important facet of what is really a world problem, that of producing food either as plant or animal crops from what must be regarded as marginal areas—that is, areas which are too difficult or too remote to maintain in good heart by the techniques which have proved profitable in temperate climates. In all these areas there is a great need for long-term experimental studies on the wild animals and plants associated with them, so that their natural productive capacity can be determined.—*Network Three*

## A Sceptical Chemist

By CHARLES VERNON

At the beginning of the nineteenth century when chemistry was emerging as a distinct and coherent science, there was a commonly held belief that the properties of substances obtained from minerals—inorganic substances—and those obtained from living organisms—organic substances—were in some way fundamentally different. Such a belief was not, perhaps, too surprising. The differences between minerals and living organisms are obvious enough: what could be more reasonable than that these differences should persist in the properties of substances derived from the living and non-living?

### Theory of a Vital Force

The characteristics of living organisms were thought to be due to the existence of a vital force, the force of life, which operates only in living organisms and is then superimposed on the usual chemical forces, thus producing organic compounds whose properties are not intelligible solely in terms of chemical forces. As an example, Berzelius invoked vital force to explain why oxalic acid, an organic substance, is a stronger acid than carbonic acid; and similar explanations for other phenomena were common at the time.

It is often supposed that the theory of vital force dropped out of organic chemistry after 1828, the year in which Wohler made urea, to quote his own words, 'without kidneys or any animal at all', by heating silver cyanate and ammonium chloride. But, in fact, vitalism survived well into the middle of the century. In 1842, for example, Liebig wrote: 'The chemical forces of cohesion and affinity in food substances, the relative positions of elementary particles in these substances, are overcome by the force of life which causes them to fall apart and to recombine in a new order of arrangement'. Eventually the climate of opinion turned against vitalism, and by 1859 Kekule, for instance, while defining organic chemistry as the chemistry of carbon, could see no contrast between organic and inorganic chemistry. Vitalism was dead as far as chemistry was concerned, and organic chemistry developed without it. It is a curious fact, however, that in the heyday of classical organic chemistry, say from 1850 to 1920, there was remarkably little contact between organic and inorganic chemists, and the two sciences developed, to a large extent, independently of each other.

It may be thought a little odd to resurrect a dead controversy. Most of us would, I suppose, dismiss vitalist theories in organic chemistry as being of only historical interest, but it seems to me that vitalism implies rather more than the mere postulation of a vital force and an analysis of it is not without interest in connection with contemporary biochemistry.

Historically, vitalism was concerned with whether it is possible to develop a set of concepts which would be equally applicable to organic and inorganic chemistry. The vitalist view was that this is not possible; the properties of organic compounds need some concept over and above the purely chemical ones which emerge from the study of inorganic compounds. Vitalism dropped out of fashion not because effective unity of the various branches of chemistry was actually achieved—this did not happen until the twentieth century—but because it seemed more reasonable that the chemical properties of substances were governed by

laws applicable to all substances, whether organic or inorganic.

What is of interest to us is whether vitalism can take a more sophisticated form than the simple postulation of a vital force. If we think of all the fields of science, it is possible to construct a kind of hierarchy. Physics, the most fundamental science, is at the base of the hierarchy. Above come chemistry, biochemistry, and biology, in that order. We talk of 'explaining' biology in terms of chemistry, or of 'explaining' chemistry in terms of physics; but we do not talk of 'explaining' physics in terms of biology. What this means in rather more precise terms is that we seek to explain the terms used in one science in terms of concepts used at a lower level of the hierarchy. An example will make this clearer. In chemistry the idea of bonding between atoms is fundamental. Two atoms of hydrogen, for example, join together to form a hydrogen molecule. The two atoms behave as though they were linked together or held together by some strong force. This force was usually called, during the last century, chemical affinity. Before 1926 this force could not be related to the forces known to physics, but with the advent of quantum mechanics it became possible to deduce from the properties of electrons and protons that combination between two hydrogen atoms would occur.

In other words, chemical affinity, a concept appropriate to chemistry, can be reduced to concepts appropriate to physics. We can calculate, using the Schrödinger equation and the known properties of the fundamental particles, the properties of the chemical bond in the hydrogen molecule and the answer is very close to what is found experimentally. In principle this can be done for any bond or set of bonds in any molecule. It cannot be done in practice because the mathematics is far too difficult. However, since there is no reason to suppose that the bond in the hydrogen molecule is fundamentally different from the bonds of other molecules, we can say that, in principle, a statement about chemical bonds can always be translated into an equivalent statement about the properties of nuclei and electrons.

Physics and chemistry form a unity, then, in the sense that there are no forces known to chemistry which are not known to physics and therefore any concept used in chemistry can, in principle, be ultimately reduced to concepts used in physics. However, this is not to say that chemistry is nothing but physics: chemistry uses, and always will use, its own distinctive concepts. It is the ultimate relation of these concepts to those of physics which is important.

### Can Biology and Biochemistry Be Reduced to Chemistry?

What about the sciences higher up in the hierarchy? Can biology and biochemistry be reduced to chemistry in the same way as chemistry can be reduced to physics? I do not want to get too involved with biology here, but a reduction of biological concepts to chemical ones would obviously be, at the present stage of our knowledge, a difficult undertaking, but probably not an impossible one. In biochemistry the problem is simpler. Biochemistry is concerned with the chemical events which occur in living organisms and as such the boundary between it and pure chemistry is somewhat arbitrary.

Nevertheless, complexities exist in biochemistry which are not



found in simpler systems. We might mention two. First, chemical reactions in living organisms are highly organised. There are complicated sequences and cycles of reactions, feed-back devices, and the whole is so organised that it maintains itself and can, at the same time, react and adapt to external changes. Secondly, the molecules which control the functioning of the whole, the proteins and nucleic acids, are far more complex than those which are encountered in pure chemistry. This complexity is such that certain concepts, such as purity and structure, cannot simply be carried over from the chemistry of small molecules to the chemistry of proteins and nucleic acids. Biochemistry needs concepts peculiar to itself because the organisation of chemical reactions and the complexity of molecular architecture with which it deals are not encountered in pure chemistry and concepts appropriate to these situations are necessary.

### High-energy Phosphate Bond

Biochemistry, then, is not just chemistry, or even just organic chemistry. What is important, however, is whether the concepts used in biochemistry are reducible to chemical ones. In the same way that chemistry and physics are a unity, so biochemistry and chemistry might also be expected to be a unity. If we find any biochemical concepts which are not ultimately reducible to those known to chemistry and which are concerned with the fact that biochemistry relates to living organisms, we can say that such concepts are vitalist. They are vitalist in the sense that chemical laws are not sufficient: over and above these some other concept will have been added. Are there any theories in biochemistry which are of this type? I submit that there are, and the one that I particularly have in mind is the so-called hypothesis of the 'high-energy phosphate bond'.

This theory originates from the time when the role in metabolic processes of substances we call phosphate esters was first discovered. This is not really the place to go into the technicalities of phosphate esters in biochemistry, but, with some risk of confusing you, I must mention some of the salient facts. The breakdown, or, as it is usually called, the degradation, of glucose in living organisms takes place in a considerable number of distinct chemical steps. For example, starting with glucose-1-phosphate the most important sequence involves a set of reactions at the end of which the original molecule which contains six carbon atoms has been split into two fragments, each with three carbon atoms. After then the process continues and a large number of compounds containing three carbon atoms become involved. All the substances formed during the degradation of glucose are called intermediates, and what is important is that many of them are phosphate esters. An examination of the whole scheme shows that at some points in the sequence new phosphate groups are introduced and that at other points phosphate groups are lost.

This cycle of introduction and loss of the phosphate groups is brought about by a substance called adenosine triphosphate, usually known by its initials as ATP, which contains those phosphate groups in a kind of chain. The function, then, of the ATP is to transfer a phosphate group at certain points of the sequence and this it does by handing over one of its own phosphate groups and so becoming adenosine diphosphate, which is itself reconverted into ATP by accepting a phosphate group at other points of the sequence.

### Universal Agent

The scheme works in such a way that the complete oxidation of one unit of glucose results in the production of between thirty and forty units of ATP. The ATP which has been formed in this way then becomes involved in many of the metabolic activities of the organism. It appears to be, in the presence of the appropriate enzymes, a kind of universal agent for the interchange of the phosphate groups and provides a chemical link between the breakdown of the glucose on the one hand and the various other synthetic activities on the other.

But to return to the theory of the high-energy phosphate bond. Most chemical reactions proceed in two directions: suppose we have two substances, A and B, which when mixed together give products C and D. If one starts with certain quantities of A and

B and waits until no further change occurs, it will be found that all four substances, A, B, C, and D, will be present in the mixture. Similarly, if one starts at the other end with substances C and D, the final mixture will again contain all four substances. The relationship between the amounts of the four substances present when no further change occurs—that is, when the mixture is in a state of equilibrium—is given by a quantity called the equilibrium constant. This equilibrium constant measures in effect the tendency of the reaction to go in a particular direction; that is, in our hypothetical reaction, whether our final mixture contains more A and B than C and D or *vice versa*.

It is often convenient to convert the equilibrium constant into another quantity called the standard free-energy change. The two quantities are in fact mathematically equivalent, but the reason for using standard free-energy changes rather than equilibrium constants is that they can be more simply related to other quantities which are of interest. The theory of the high-energy phosphate bond starts from the observation that the standard free-energy change for the reaction of ATP and water is rather larger than that of most simple phosphate esters. The exact figures are in dispute, but there seems no doubt that this observation is basically correct. A large standard free energy of hydrolysis for ATP means that at equilibrium there will be a smaller amount of ATP left than would be the case for other phosphate esters.

So far, so good; nothing reminiscent of vitalism about this. But in 1949 the term 'high-energy bond' was introduced to denote this difference between ATP and other phosphate esters. It was said that ATP had a high-energy bond whereas other phosphate esters had a low-energy bond. The breaking or cleavage of high-energy bonds is imagined to liberate large amounts of energy which may be used by the organism either to drive chemical reactions in the right direction or for the production of mechanical work. Catabolic processes are said to be so organised as to lead to the production of high-energy bonds. The reverse processes—*anabolic processes*—then utilise this energy.

### Special Symbol

A special symbol has been invented to denote a high-energy bond, and discussions of metabolic processes are often given in terms of the handing on of free energy from one reaction to another. There has been discussion on whether free energy escapes in stages or all at once, but this need not concern us. Again, the function of intermediate products is sometimes considered to be understood if it is said they possess a high-energy bond.

The peculiarity of this view is that it cannot be reduced to, nor is it consistent with, orthodox chemical concepts. Bond energy means something quite different to a chemist: one cannot get energy out of breaking a bond—this is a process which consumes energy, not releases it. Furthermore, standard free-energy changes, which provide the experimental basis for the theory, are not actual free-energy changes but only hypothetical quantities relating to changes which would be observed under hypothetical conditions. In addition, free energy is not the same as energy: confusion between these two can lead to some very peculiar conclusions.

What, then, is the justification for using the data about equilibrium constants in this way? On the surface of it, none at all. Some biochemists will say: 'Ah well, the phosphate bond theory is only a shorthand way of dealing with equilibrium constants—we really mean the same as the chemists but it is convenient to call everything by different names'. My view is that this defence will not stand. If one tries to translate discussions of high-energy bonds back into chemical concepts it becomes evident that it cannot be done. The biochemists really do mean something more; and since this something more is concerned with the organisation of life and cannot, as far as I can see, be reduced to chemical concepts, it should properly be called vitalist. The high-energy bond theory is vitalist in the sense that it supposes something to be handed from reaction to reaction in a highly organised way. This something cannot be reduced to chemical terms although by talking about standard-free energies it is often pretended that it can.

My view is that the theory illustrates two important tendencies. One is to believe that chemistry and biochemistry really are a unity, and that general laws governing both can be discovered. The other arises from the extremely complex chemical organisa-



tion existing in living matter which gives rise to the feeling that this cannot be expressed in terms of existing chemical concepts. The second tendency readily gives rise to vitalism, but the intellectual atmosphere of our age is such that this is never overt. It appears to me that we really do need new concepts to deal with organised chemical reactions. These concepts, however, in order to escape the charge of vitalism, must be clearly reducible to

chemical concepts. Some have suggested that entropy-flow in chemical sequences might be a meaningful and useful idea. Whatever the truth of that may be, it is certain that biochemistry does need new concepts to deal with its complex problems. It should be the job of chemists to assist in this and to make sure that biochemical theory does not get directed into the blind alley of vitalism.—*Third Programme*

## How to Live in Anarchy

By ERNEST GELLNER

**T**HERE is one particular primitive system which seems to me to throw some light on contemporary international politics, namely, the system of trial by collective oath. This system operated until very recently amongst the Berber tribes of the Atlas mountains, but similar systems have existed elsewhere.

This system originally functioned against a background of anarchy: there was no law-enforcing agency. But whilst there was nothing resembling a state, there was a society, for everyone recognised more or less the same code, and recognised, more or less, the universal desirability of pacific settlement of disputes. There was a recognised manner of settling them, namely, trial by collective oath. Suppose a man is accused of an offence by another: the man can clear himself of the charge by bringing a set of men, co-jurors so to speak, to testify solemnly with a ritual formula at a holy place that he is innocent or in the right. The number of co-jurors required will depend on the gravity of the offence. The co-jurors must appear and testify in a fixed order, according to family proximity in the male line to the man on trial. The order is the same as the order of claimants to the man's inheritance. Those who have a common stake in property are also those who are jointly responsible and called to trial.

The rule, the decision procedure, so to speak, is that if some of the co-jurors fail to turn up, or fail to testify, or make a slip while testifying, the whole oath is invalid and the case is lost. The losing party is then obliged to pay the appropriate fine, determined by custom. In some regions, the rule is even stranger: those co-jurors who failed to turn up or failed when testifying are liable for the fine, rather than the testifying group as a whole.

How strange it is that this system should work at all: strange not only by contrast with our own legal decision procedures, but strange in the light of the possible motivation of the participants. A genuine legal decision procedure, or for that matter a decision procedure in any other field, must not be predetermined: a penny that always comes down heads is not much use for a toss. Yet it looks as if this decision procedure were always bound to come down on the side of the defendant. Even a sophisticated social anthropologist to whom I described the system was puzzled, remarking that from all one knew of such clans the interest of the clan came above everything else, so that one should expect the co-jurors in all cases to testify by their clansman: my clan, right or wrong.

### Incentive to Perjury

Here there is an additional incentive to perjury in the system: a man who lets down a kinsman at the collective oath, refusing to testify, say, that his kinsman had not stolen a sheep when he knows full well that indeed he *has*—such an honest and truthful kinsman suffers the penalty of paying the fine whilst the perjured kinsmen do not. Yet the system did work, and if the system had been predetermined in all its verdicts, no one would have bothered to take recourse to it and it would not have survived.

What is the explanation? The participants themselves see the collective oath as supernaturally sanctioned: the temptation to clan loyalty and hence perjury is balanced by the threat of punishment by the offended supernatural forces. We might say that the tribesmen believe that punishment will descend upon the group of

perjurers, and this prevents perjury despite the inducements to it. This kind of explanation, in terms of the transcendental beliefs of the participants, is inadequate. Although the tribesmen do or did believe in the supernatural sanctions and their effectiveness, their belief was either not so firm, or if firm not so compelling, as to prevent perjury occurring none the less. Secondly, I doubt whether any practice can survive which is propped up by nothing but transcendental belief. There are always more beliefs of this kind than are systematically acted upon: other, social, factors must operate before a belief really is compelling in practice.

### What Made the System Work?

What then made the system work, if not the transcendental belief alone? We must remember that each of the two groups is just as anarchic internally as the two are in their external relations with each other: neither internally nor externally is there a law-and-order-enforcing machinery, though there is a recognised law, and a recognised obligation to respect order. In fact, the distinction between internal and external politics does not apply. We tend to see it as a sharp distinction in view of the effective internal power of national states, and the ineffectiveness of the international order. But internal and external are, in the context of such tribes, entirely relative. Disputes can occur at any level: between two elementary families, or between two tribal confederacies numbered in tens of thousands, and at any of the levels in between, and the nature and context of the dispute will be similar.

Given this anarchy, this lack of enforcement within as well as without the group, one way short of violence or expulsion which a clan or family have of disciplining one of their own number is by letting him down at the collective oath. Far from never having a motive for letting down a clansman, or only a transcendental one, they may in fact frequently have such a motive: a habitual offender within their own number may be a positive danger to the group. If he repeats his offences he may well provoke surrounding groups into forming a coalition against it—if, that is, his own group habitually stands by him at the collective oath. They may do so the first time: the second time, they may, or some of them may, decide to teach him a lesson, even though it is to their own immediate material disadvantage.

In other words, members of a clan are sometimes prepared to impose legal defeat on themselves, and suffer the consequences. Thus trial by collective oath can be a genuine and sensitive decision procedure, a decision procedure whose verdict is a function of a number of things, amongst which justice is one but not the only one: it is a function of the cohesion of the clan of the accused, of their assessment of the rights of the case and of the general character of the accused, of their willingness to fight on the issue. This decision procedure does indeed automatically lead to a verdict of 'not guilty' when the clan is united and feels strongly and unanimously about the issue, and to that extent the procedure may seem unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of abstract justice. But in those very conditions—cohesion, unanimity, and determination of the clan—a contrary verdict could not be enforced anyway: or, rather, it could only be enforced by war, and that recourse remains open to the plaintiffs

(continued on page 582)



# NEWS DIARY

March 26-31

## Wednesday, March 26

Third American earth satellite launched

Labour Party Executive denounces South African Government's 'determined effort to set up a permanent white dictatorship'

President Eisenhower announces that foreign observers are to be invited for the first time to watch next series of American nuclear tests in the Pacific

Record price of £25,500 paid for a water-colour by Cézanne at a sale in London

## Thursday, March 27

Mr. Khrushchev is elected Soviet Prime Minister in succession to Mr. Bulganin

German Social Democrat Party announces that it will oppose nuclear rearmament 'by all constitutional means'

Engineering employers agree to meet unions to consider plan for a forty-hour week

Select Committee on obscene publications publishes its report

## Friday, March 28

Liberal Party wins by-election at Torrington, Devon, by majority of 219

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh arrive home from State visit to Holland

German trade union organisation calls for public referendum about proposed nuclear rearmament of West German forces

Forty miles of the Northumberland coast, including Holy Island and Farne Islands, to be established as 'an area of outstanding natural beauty'

## Saturday, March 29

Minister of Defence, Mr. Duncan Sandys, returns home from visit to Western Germany

President Nasser to visit Moscow next month

Indonesian Government claims further successes against the rebels

Grand National won by Irish horse, Mr. What

## Sunday, March 30

Mr. Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations, arrives in London from Moscow

Two members of crew of mine-layer *Apollo* to be court-martialled following recent incidents on the ship

Israel and Syrian border troops clash in demilitarised zone south of Lake Huleh

## Monday, March 31

In Canadian General Election Conservatives win sweeping victory

Russia announces she is stopping nuclear tests and invites other Powers to do the same

Mr. Hammarskjöld sees Mr. Selwyn Lloyd at the Foreign Office



Soviet leaders at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet on March 27 signifying their assent to the election of Mr. Khrushchev (front row, centre) as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. He displaced Mr. Bulganin (top right) who resigned and has since been appointed chairman of the State Bank. Marshal Voroshilov (right, foreground) was re-elected President



A view of East Afton Down, Freshwater, Isle of Wight, which has been bought by the National Trust by Lord Mottistone. Compton Farm (240 acres), which lies on the steep chalk cliff in the centre of the photograph, has been bought by Lord Mottistone and will thus extend the protected area



Two Syrian bear cubs, born to 'Winnie' and 'Pickles' at the London Zoo last New Year's Eve, making their first appearance in public last week. None of their kind has before been born at the Zoo



Work on the restoration of Stonehenge began last week: a broken lintel from the monument is being removed for repair before being re-erected



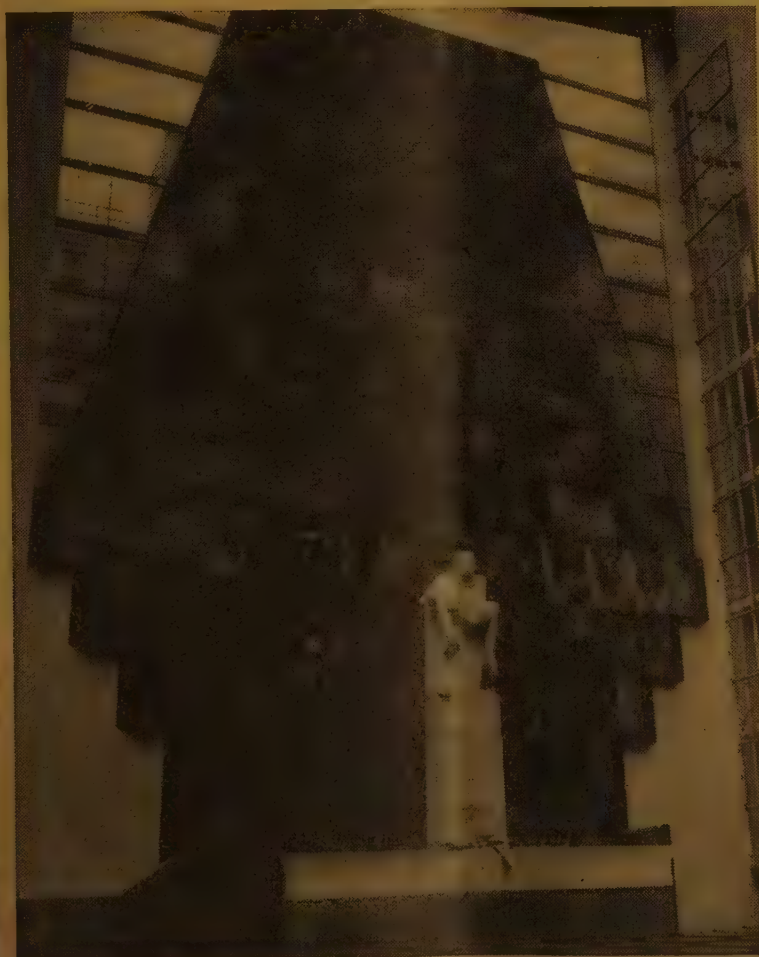


A group taken in Amsterdam to mark the State visit to Holland last week: the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh with Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard and two of their daughters, Princess Beatrix and Princess Irene



The Queen and the Duke, accompanied by Queen Juliana and Princess Irene, photographed during a visit to the hydraulics laboratory at Delft on March 27. From a platform suspended over an experimental pool they are being shown a model of Europort, the new harbour which is to be built west of the Hook of Holland

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Sir Jacob Epstein's memorial to trades unionists who died in both world wars, at the new T.U.C. headquarters in Bloomsbury, opened on March 27. The figure is twenty feet high and stands against a background of green marble



The great hall of Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, with plaster work executed by James Gibb in 1750. At Easter the house is being opened for the first time to the public by the Marquess of Hertford

er circle



(continued from page 579)

anyway. So nothing is lost, while something may be gained, in those cases when cohesion, conviction, and determination are lacking, for then the trial gives the accused party the opportunity of giving way gracefully.

### Settlement Out of Court

Many issues are settled out of court, that is before an actual collective oath is taken but with the threat that it will be invoked if a settlement is not reached. The accused's party may bluff in offering to testify, the accusers may bluff in insisting on so grave a step. Inside the clan, there may equally be bluff in declarations both of willingness or reluctance to testify. The situation is particularly delicate for the alleged culprit; he may proclaim his innocence and his willingness to involve his clansmen in what he maintains is a truthful oath, but he is taking a risk even if in the event his kinsmen stick by him. The divine punishment of perjury is the kind of event which in fact sooner or later happens anyway: a flood, a drought, a plague. The accused is providing any enemies or rivals within his own group with a powerful handle against himself, when disaster comes. Thus every group polices its own members owing to the collective responsibility implicit both in the oath and in the feud. But more than this: not merely is there this kind of informal internal policing, each group enlisted to survey and warrant the good behaviour of its own members but also and equally there is what one might call 'cross-policing': the danger from the hostile group, the fear of being thrown to the wolves, is what enables groups to restrain their own members.

Thus the profoundly paradoxical trial by collective oath can work. It does indeed give any determined, cohesive clan the veto on any decision that would, in virtue of that cohesion, be unenforceable anyway; on the other hand, however, it gives groups the possibility of half-throwing culprits to the wolves, of giving in gracefully, of disciplining the unruly member without actually having to expel him or kill him, as sometimes they had to.

Thus one of the roles of the collective oath, the veto on unenforceable decision, is analogous to the right of veto given to the Great Powers in the United Nations. But note that the tribal device is much subtler than the United Nations veto rule, which is extremely crude. The tribal rule is as if certain countries did indeed have the power of veto, but only provided the head of state could muster forty M.P.s, selected cross-party-wise in a traditionally fixed manner, and have them solemnly support his veto. When capable of doing that—and, for instance, neither France nor Britain would have been able to do this during the Suez crisis—this would unambiguously indicate determined support inside the country for the policy in question; and in this case such a reinforced veto would indeed fulfil a most useful purpose—the purpose for which the veto rule was devised—namely the prevention of the passing of a resolution which is then totally unenforceable.

But while there is merely an incomplete analogy between the technical rules in each case, it seems to me that a far closer, though still of course incomplete, analogy does hold between the reality of tribal order and that of international politics. The principles elicited in trying to account for how the superficially absurd

legal procedures of the Berbers could work are also in some measure applicable to the international scene. In both cases there is an anarchic situation with hostile groups or blocs facing each other and no effective authority to regulate or arbitrate their strife. In both cases, enforcement is as difficult inside blocs as between them. In both cases, one might easily be tested to conclude that the setting up of arbitration and decision procedures, with participants being jurors in their own cases, is pointless, for would not loyalty to clan or bloc inevitably overrule other considerations? I think not. The seeing of United Nations voting alignments as analogous to collective oaths amongst Berbers, and working similarly, strongly suggests itself by the events of the Suez crisis.

Without undue cynicism one may say that it was not moral indignation alone which led the allies of Britain and France to take a stand against them and condemn the landings. In part it was also a matter of punishing, disciplining fellow members. Britain and France were being taught a lesson by their own clan. They had taken a chance on external fears keeping their reluctant clansmen loyal at the oath—and for once they did not. Where fundamental divergences exist within a clan or bloc, such a letting-down at the collective oath may be the only way of enforcing discipline within the camp. There is an internal as well as an external trial of strength, a counting of allies and co-jurors; the internal and external strife are complementary, and each mitigates the other.

### Compensations, Tribal and International

In both cases, while groups may need to discipline their own members by letting them down at the oath, they also want to keep up their strength, not losing any member if possible, and hence will make amends after the disciplining has taken place: in the tribal case the reluctant co-jurors will pay the compensation. On the international scene, less formalised but equally substantial compensations may be forthcoming to restore harmony within the alliance. Also any good bloc or clan needs some device for discouraging co-jurors from being too easily reluctant, too frequently high-minded and objective.

There are other analogies between the two situations: in both cases total war would be disastrous to each side in view of the superiority of attack over defence, and hence it is generally desired to avoid it. It has been suggested of late that the disastrousness of all-out conflict is a consequence of nuclear weapons, but something similar may hold of tribesmen in view of the precariousness of their economy. So-called warfare amongst tribes tends to be a matter of raiding, which respects women and property when it cannot be carried away as booty: fields are not ravaged. If they were, warring tribes could mutually reduce each other to starvation, and such methods are characteristically not employed.

Further analogies are the emergence of, so to speak, professional institutionalised neutrals, drawn from groups that are weak in physical strength; neutrals who become less than judges, and act rather as mediators or masters of ceremonies at peace-making occasions. Again, in both cases the opposing groups each cement their internal solidarity by dubiously valid myths or ideologies. Again, in both cases, there

are beliefs sincerely held which nevertheless would not by themselves assure order. Tribesmen believe that the shrine will punish perjurers, and analogously Foreign Ministers believe it their duty to work for peace, but these convictions by themselves are a slender guarantee. These ideas, often ignored, can however conveniently be invoked by those who wish to break clan loyalty at the oath. In both cases it is known that if punishment comes it will be collective: the bomb or the famine will descend upon the innocent and the guilty alike.

It is often supposed that tribal society is characterised by a moral code which differentiates sharply between members and non-members of the group: the limit of the tribe is the limit of obligation, and only inside it is one required to take recourse to pacific settlements of disputes. Sometimes this may be so, but not necessarily: the tribal situation I have described is characterised by a more or less common and universal morality for all men, in and out of the tribe. Tribalism, partiality, enters not with regard to the content of the code, but in connection with its enforcement, which has, as I have tried to show, a subtle machinery for adjusting verdicts to the reality of power.

There is similarly something like a common morality concerning fundamental issues in our case, disagreements on values being less than basic. Conflicts concern interest and security more than moral principle. But there is a sliding scale in the application of that morality, a sliding scale built into the actual operation of voting and the system of blocs, a sliding scale which ensures that the diplomatically isolated and weak plaintiff comes out worse than a strong and well-connected one: and this incentive to cultivate international friends provides some inducement to orderly behaviour. During the Suez crisis, Mr. Ben Gurion complained that a different code was being applied to the weak and to the strong, and suggested this iniquity would undermine respect for international order. On the contrary such iniquity is absolutely essential for this kind of order. One cannot have small and isolated countries taking powerful or well-aligned ones to court, and even winning, for no better reason than that they happen to be right. That would undermine the order by leading to a series of totally unenforceable verdicts.

### Might and Right

The adjustable sliding scale of application, made workable by the presence of disunity within as well as without groups, must not be seen merely as might masquerading as right. This is not so either in tribal or in international society. It is, on the contrary, a compromise between brazen might and the rule of impartial and enforced justice. It also gives way to might where, in any case, there is no alternative, and it enforces justice against offenders who are also weak or undiplomatic. It gives justice a chance in the shadowy but extensive borderland between the two. Might is often an unpredictable matter. When both contestants stand to lose from open violence or when it is unpredictable which one would, it makes the verdict partly a function of justice. Only partly, but also at least partly: half a loaf is perhaps better than no bread.

I am trying to bring out the conditions and mechanics of obtaining that half loaf of justice. One common misconception is that the situation



in anarchic contexts would be improved if only the participants could overcome their clan or bloc loyalty, if only, instead of 'my clan or bloc, right or wrong' they would think and act as individuals. This common assumption seems to underlie, for instance, Mr. Hugh Gaitskell's regret for the existence of blocs, in his Harvard lectures of 1957. It seems to me, on the contrary, that unless and until there is genuine enforcement, only blocs or clans can make an anarchic system work. The Rousseau-esque ideal of individual judgements, unbiased by faction, contributing to a common pool, is undesirable. The vagaries of individual judgement are too unpredictable. The effective result would be chaos and insecurity. Admittedly even ordinary internal elections, just like the collective oath or the United Nations assembly vote, become a genuine decision procedure thanks only to the existence of some independent floating voters: but equally these systems require for their stability and survival a sizeable proportion of voters who are simply loyal to their party rather than swayed by what they think of the merits of the current issue.

So far, I have concentrated on the positive analogies between our international order and a kind of tribal law. That there is such an analogy is an old, platitudinous idea; I have tried to show that the analogies are different from what is often imagined. There are also points where the analogy fails.

In both cases, total war would be disastrous to both parties if they are anything like equally matched, and hence partial wars are the rule. But there is a difference: what militates against total war between tribes is not merely the unreasonableness of such a proceeding, but also that to initiate it greater co-ordination and cohesion amongst individuals would be necessary than generally obtains. In our case, it appears that total war could be initiated by even a small group of favourably placed people, and hence the danger is greater.

A part of the answer to the question how the tribal system works is that it does not altogether work. I had to explain why it works at all, and partly it does, but not fully. Indeed, in order to work at all it is paradoxically essential that it should not work perfectly: for the ultimate

sanction of its legal procedures is violence, and if violence never occurred the sanction would lose its force. Indeed, the system may seem to work more than it actually does by a kind of optical illusion: after a breakdown into total anarchy the surviving groups behave to each other as of old, so that one has the impression of continuity. Those who disappeared in the meantime might not agree. The system, however, survives.

We can hardly be expected to consider ourselves so expendable. Even if we were so detached, it is not likely that our system would survive the destruction of its parts. We cannot afford to tolerate the partial failures of the kind of system which we now share with tribal society. So I am not saying that such a system works well enough: only that it works in a different way from what is often supposed. Until there is effective central enforcement it would be worse, not better, to do without groupings. But this is not to say that the system will do: for, notoriously, we cannot afford those occasional failures which are inherent in it.

—Third Programme

## 'The Music of Time'

By WALTER ALLEN

**A**T *Lady Molly's\** is the fourth and most recent of Anthony Powell's sequence of novels *The Music of Time*, and pretty plainly the beginning of a new phase, a new movement, in the work as a whole. Characters we have not met before come into the book as Nicholas Jenkins pursues his indefatigable social life: characters representative of, among other things, the backwoods peerage as it exists both in its native haunts and in its trading-posts in London, and also of court circles.

To this extent, the picture of English society between the wars that Powell is giving us in these novels is widening. The invention obviously is as unflagging as ever, the comic scenes are no less brilliant, the new characters as vivid and as wittily presented as those we have come to know so well. But it becomes more and more difficult to see when and how the work as a whole will end. Indeed, at the moment there seems no good reason why it should ever end so long as its author has life and health. And I have no doubt that we shall go on reading further volumes as they appear with the same delighted curiosity and fascination with which we have read the earlier books.

Part of the fascination, it seems to me, is akin to that exercised upon us by the diaries of a writer like Creevey or the journals of the Goncourt brothers. If this suggests that at one level we read these novels of Powell's as, so to say, inspired gossip writing, I mean it as high praise; for it is evidence of the immediate convincingness of his imagined world and the reality of its inhabitants in our mind. This ability to convince, to persuade us that his narration is a true and faithful record of what could have happened, remains the novelist's fundamental gift, without which all others are vain.

All the same, Mr. Powell is not Creevey.

Creevey's province, as a historian of a kind, was the actual; we can check his presentation and assessment of the historical personages who throng his pages against presentations and assessments of the same figures made by his contemporaries. But Mr. Powell is a novelist; his characters are fictitious and not susceptible to checking in any normal sense. We have, as with any other novelist, only the author's word for them, as it were; and this means that, if we are to try to estimate their adequacy to the author's intention as a whole—which, in the case of *The Music of Time*, seems to be nothing less than to reveal the nature of an age, to show us a society in a period of significant change and possibly disintegration—then we have to come back to the point of view from which the author sees them, the eye which selects them as somehow representative, and the attitudes which inform them. In other words, what interests me at the moment is the values that seem implicit in these later novels of Anthony Powell.

In order to see what light they throw on the problem I have been reading the five novels he wrote between 1931 and 1939: *Afternoon Men*, *Venusberg*, *From a View to a Death*, *Agents and Patients*, and *What's Become of Waring*. They are an impressive quintet, as impressive in their distinctly various ways as *The Music of Time* itself. No single one of these novels seems to me more or less characteristic of its author's talents than another; and if I pick out *Afternoon Men*, the first of them all, to discuss at some length, it is partly because it is my own favourite and partly because, in some ways at least, it lends itself to sharp contrast with *The Music of Time*.

Powell as a young novelist was often compared to Evelyn Waugh. There are technical resemblances but not, I think, much real

affinity. Waugh's early novels are more than half fantasies: behind their author stands Ronald Firbank. By comparison, Powell's is the world as commonly observed. *Decline and Fall* is comedy for its own sake; *Afternoon Men*, wryer and drier, is pure satire, satire to satisfy Wyndham Lewis. Contrast the names of Powell's characters with those of Waugh's: Margot Metroland, Miles Malpractice, Agatha Runcible—none of Powell's characters is called anything so frankly extravagant. In other contexts, his names would probably not even be slightly eccentric, though in their context they have the unquestioned rightness of *le mot juste*: the name of Naomi Race, for instance, in *Afternoon Men*, would not surprise if one saw it in the telephone book, but for an old Bohemian lady who once knew Rossetti what could be better?

Again, though the world of *Afternoon Men* is as small as Waugh's, it is not at all the same world. It is not Mayfair but Bohemia, the near-slums of art; its inhabitants the seedy denizens of S.W.3 and W.C.1, whose focal points are the pubs and clubs of Soho. It is an altogether more slovenly world, and as Mr. Powell describes it, one of the minor circles of hell, and rarely has it been depicted with such wit or such elegant contempt—as I think this paragraph shows:

Slowly but very deliberately the brooding edifice of seduction, creaking and incongruous, came into being, a vast Heath Robinson mechanism, dually controlled by them and lumbering down vistas of triteness. With a sort of heavy-fisted dexterity the mutually adapted emotions of each of them became synchronised, until the unavoidable anti-climax was at hand. Later they dined at a restaurant quite near the flat.

I mentioned Wyndham Lewis: in a sentence that is perhaps hackneyed by now Lewis said:



'Dogmatically I am for the Great Without, for the method of external approach—for the wisdom of the eye rather than that of the ear'. In *Afternoon Men*, Powell too is for the Great Without, though he combines the wisdom of the eye with that of the ear in a sense not intended by Lewis. His physical descriptions are sketched in in a minimum of words, with unerring effect. This, for instance, surely pins down for good one kind of female art student who is always with us:

Her general tendency was to resemble an early John drawing but she adapted this style to the exigencies of the fashion of the moment

—just as the place in which she lives is summed up completely in the single sentence:

The room had bits of stuff pinned round the walls and two large red candles on the mantel-piece.

But a good half of his effect Powell gets through his uncannily precise ear for speech. On the first page of the novel we find this—the scene is a night club:

'If you pay for this round and give me three-and-ninence we shall be all square'.

That is Pringle. It establishes him and, given that revelatory sentence, we are surprised at nothing.

In *Afternoon Men*, then, Powell is the most economical of writers, and the more deadly because of that. His eye and ear alike are merciless; his victims simply have no chance; they are isolated in all their portentous silliness by the gestures in which he surprises them and by the words they speak. And there is no direct comment. It is impossible to call the author a moralist. His contempt, at once savage and fastidious, is expressed in his selection of detail, in the dialogue he puts in his characters' mouths, in his choice of names for them, above all in the form of the novel itself. Built up in a succession of brief shots like a film, from beginning to end it describes a full circle, so that at the last page we feel like saying, 'This is where we came in'.

For, as the form indicates, there is no reason at all why the action described, the round of drinks, parties, seductions, should ever stop as long as the characters remain alive. The area of Mr. Powell's London in this novel is small, as is the social milieu in which his characters move. It is as confined, as stuffy, as restless, as endlessly repetitious as the world of goldfish in a bowl. It has the same kind of pointless business, which is brilliantly conveyed through the use of characters that are strictly supernumerary to the plot but float backwards and forwards across it.

### An Aesthetic Disdain

But there is this difference between the world of *Afternoon Men* and a goldfish bowl: goldfish are dumb. Their world is silent; but that of *Afternoon Men* echoes and re-echoes, as the characters cross and recross their restricted orbits, with gossip and scandal, with the latest news of everyone else's private life. To the extreme messiness of these lives, the promiscuity and drunkenness, the sprawling confusion of the parties, the inefficiency and dirt ('We none of us wash much here'), Powell opposes not moral indignation or outraged denunciation but what one might call an aesthetic disdain, which is expressed in the austerity, the formal order, of his novel.

*The Music of Time* is an enormously more

ambitious work than *Afternoon Men* but it is possible to put the two side by side for comparison. The world Powell describes today is still, as in the earlier works generally, a world in which Society and Bohemia meet and indeed sometimes merge one into the other, just as Mayfair and Soho do in simple topographical fact. And the sense of formal order is as strong as ever it was. Mr. Powell, it is plain, sees life aesthetically; life is significant only in so far as formal order can be imposed upon it. On the first page of the first novel in the *Music of Time* sequence, *A Question of Upbringing*, we have the whole aesthetic of the work laid bare.

It is dominated by the image of human beings as participants in a dance, a dance over which they have no control because its movements and their steps in it are governed by the music of time. Powell returns to this image of human life as a dance repeatedly throughout the four novels we have up to the present. I have no doubt they could be analysed in terms of a formal dance, from part to part of each book, with the figure round whom the dance flows or who gives it significance always the incomparable Widmerpool.

### 'Facing Outward'

But they dance, Powell's characters, 'facing outward', as in Poussin's painting. Facing outward to whom? Not to the reader directly, but to Jenkins. And here, all question of difference of scope and scale apart, we have the great difference between *Afternoon Men* and *The Music of Time*. The only comment permitted in *Afternoon Men* is what we may deduce from the complete absence of comment; what happens in that novel occurs, as it were, in a self-contained world which exists with reference to nothing outside it. In *The Music of Time* what happens happens with reference to Jenkins. He mediates between us and the action; he interprets it for us. This makes him in one way the most important character in the work, for he dictates the way in which we see all the others.

Jenkins is a solid creation: we take his word for what happens in the novel. But there is a whole side of him, as with the moon, that exists only by inference. In *At Lady Molly's*, for example, he meets Lady Isabel Tolland and by the end of it is engaged to be married to her. But all this, his courtship, his emotional life, is conducted off-stage, as it were. It is irrelevant. His function is to be an extremely subtle recording instrument, and he comes alive by virtue of what, out of the whole range of phenomena about him, he chooses to record. He is very intelligent—that goes without saying—but he is intensely selective in what he chooses to record. He is a connoisseur of paintings and of people. His curiosity about people is insatiable, and he has acquired an uncommon talent for placing people—placing them, that is, in the social hierarchy.

He is a moralist, but a moralist in the French rather than the English way; perhaps one should say a moral psychologist. His interest is in the analysis of human behaviour and the motives that prompt it. The main motive appears to be the will to power, seen at its most grotesque and also at its most formidable in Widmerpool; but no less apparent in careerists like Quiggin and Mark Members, and intriguers like Sillery. The converse of the will to power is the envy of failure: against Widmerpool must be set Uncle

Giles; and his early experience of these two contrasted types provides Jenkins with the standards of reference by which he judges the men he meets in later life. He is constantly being reminded either of the one or of the other, a narrowness of interpretation that makes for a certain monotony in the work.

But there is something else about Jenkins. His curiosity may be insatiable but it is also extremely narrow. One could make a much longer list of the things he is not interested in than of the things he is. To take an obvious example: he seems to have met no one yet who is religious even in the most conventional way, much less anyone who has undergone conversion. He has his being in a world of self-regard, which he takes at its own valuation. This is surely a real limitation to the work as a whole.

That amiable old silly Mr. Deacon leaves his copies of *War Never Pays* under a chair at Mrs. Andriadis' party. How and why did Mr. Deacon get mixed up in the pacifist movement? We are not told. Jenkins sees a procession marching in protest against the Means Test: it is led by Sillery, and it includes the eminent novelist St. John Clarke, pushed in his wheelchair by the critic Quiggin. Are they supposed to represent intellectual left-wing politics in the 'thirties? I do not know and I am not sure that Jenkins knows either, for he shows absolutely no interest in the events of contemporary history or of the ideas that shape men's minds at a given period; except in so far as they can be used and exploited by men with a will to power.

The effect of this is not to increase but to diminish the stature of the characters Jenkins observes. It is to make them puppets of time; and the dance performed to the music of time appears to be uncommonly like the dance of death. It may be that it is just this that Mr. Powell has set out to demonstrate in his remarkable sequence of novels. But time must have a stop, and what we are all awaiting now is the great generalisation one hopes will come at the end, Mr. Powell's *Le Temps Retrouvé*, which may well cause us to revise radically all the judgements we made while the work was in progress.—*Third Programme*

## Hear the Bird of Day

Hear, the bird of day  
Stirs in his blue tree,  
Fumbles for words to say  
The things a bird may learn  
From brooding half the night,  
What's matter but a hardening of the light?

Out of this seed of song  
Discoursing with the dark,  
Now in a clear tongue  
Rises his lonely voice,  
And all the east is bright.  
What's matter but a hardening of the light?

Mountain and brilliant bird,  
The ram and the wren,  
For each there is a word;  
In every grain of sand  
Stands a singer in white.  
What's matter but a hardening of the light?

DAVID CAMPBELL



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor welcomes letters on broadcasting subjects or topics arising out of articles printed in THE LISTENER but reserves the right to shorten letters for reasons of space

## Why Britain Loses Orders for Exports

Sir,—Mr. James R. White refers (THE LISTENER, March 20) to the loss of a £10,000,000 contract in Portugal and then proceeds to do his best to handicap our export trade by ill-informed statements and vulgar abuse of British exporters.

To obtain accurate information about these negotiations, he need not have gone further than Westminster, where he could have seen complimentary letters from our Portuguese friends, who have expressed complete confidence in the technical ability of the British consortium.

The loss of this contract was primarily due to the credit terms offered by the Belgo-German consortium, which included firms owning collieries, who were able to offer coke supplies. The nationalisation of our coal industry made it impossible to meet this requirement.

This company is, however, responsible, through an associated syndicate, for the construction of an iron- and steel-works in India costing over £100,000,000, and Mr. J. R. White may be pleased to know that there are organisations which work very hard and efficiently to obtain export trade.—Yours, etc.,

D. F. CAMPBELL

Metallurgical Equipment  
Export Company Ltd.,  
London, S.W.1

Sir,—In THE LISTENER of March 20 you give the text of Mr. White's recent broadcast.

The few examples of commercial inefficiency which he quotes tend, as is always the case, to create the impression that British industry as a

whole just hasn't got a clue when it comes to international trading. One cannot help wondering how many similar criticisms could be levelled against Britain's competitors, if the facts were known. But the Continentals are not prone to publicising their own deficiencies.

When it comes to gaining orders for export, however, the motor industry, for one, does not seem to be doing so badly. Its exports are now reported to be running at all-time record levels, even against the fiercest Continental competition and the developing trends of world trade—an achievement hardly possible were it guilty of such methods as Mr. White records.

It is as well sometimes to see all these things in perspective.—Yours, etc.,

London, S.W.10 LAWRENCE E. M. RICH

## Advantages of Anglo-American Marriage

Sir,—In her talk entitled 'Advantages of Anglo-American Marriage' (THE LISTENER, March 20) Miss Marya Mannes spoke of 'the Englishwoman's acceptance of a limited status' and 'the abdication of her own full and free personality'.

This evasion of responsibility is generally held to be a feminine virtue. In drawing up rules and regulations for female conduct—a favourite pastime throughout the ages—the comfort and convenience of others has been most carefully considered, the woman's personality seldom if ever. A good appearance and a few negative virtues should be sufficient for any woman, and what matter if some of them die of frustration, there will still be plenty to carry on the race!

It is a pity that we have to leave it to an American woman to protest at this situation. In these days of cost-counting, it might at least be worth while to consider what we lose by it.

Yours, etc.,

High Wycombe ISLA M. WILLIAMS

## 'Live Happy Ever Laughter'

Sir,—The custom of up-ending chairs on which a coffin had rested, mentioned by Mr. W. R. Rodgers in THE LISTENER of March 27, is also to be found in the south of Ireland. A few years ago I was at the funeral of an uncle in west Cork. As soon as the coffin was lifted before being borne out, his old housekeeper, from a neighbouring fishing village, shouted: 'Capsize the chairs!'

Yours, etc.,

Dalkey RICHARD MANSFIELD

## 'War's Annals'

Sir,—I hesitate to correct so erudite a critic as Mr. Ivor Brown and I hope he will forgive my pointing out his incorrect quotation from Thomas Hardy's poem, 'In the time of the breaking of Nations', in THE LISTENER of March 27.

The third line of the verse quoted by Mr. Brown should read: 'War's annals will cloud into night', not 'Love's annals'. This one word alters completely the meaning of the verse. Hardy, in his poem, implied that there were things that would persist in spite of wars or the passing of dynasties. Love between man and woman was one of these things.—Yours, etc.,

Kinver

LEONARD SOURBUTTS

## Gardening

# Growing Campanulas

By F. H. STREETER

THE campanulas are a beautiful class of plants, and the particular variety I wish to bring to your notice is called campanula pyramidalis, or the steeple-bell flower, more commonly known as the chimney-flowering campanula. The flowers are blue and white, and come into flower in July, August, and September. These campanulas thrive in the mixed border, throwing up spikes four to five feet high and several spikes to a plant. I have known them last as long as four years in the border.

For either blue or white groups, plant them near the delphiniums and then they will give you a good succession and do away with that gap that sometimes happens in the border. But by far the best way to grow them is in pots, and treat them as biennial just like Canterbury bells, but instead of sowing the seed outside sow the seed in boxes now. They like sandy soil. Raise them in the cool house, or in the window if you shade them, till the young plants are nicely

through, then prick them out into other boxes before planting out one foot apart during the latter end of May, on an enriched piece of ground. Keep them watered and the soil constantly hoed and clear of weeds, and then in the summer of next year you should have some magnificent plants.

Campanula pyramidalis will stand the weather right through the winter, so leave them in their nursery border until the spring. Then you will notice the plants are beginning to show signs of making new growth—in fact, mine are starting off now, despite having gone through sixteen and seventeen degrees of frost and being covered up in the snow.

For pot work, lift them carefully in the spring, keeping all the fibrous roots you can, and try to get the large fleshy roots into seven-, eight-, or nine-inch pots, according to the size of the plants. Use some well-rotted manure in the compost. Sift it through a fine sieve as there

is not much room for the soil and it must be fine. Make it firm, but do not ram it. Then plunge the pots in ashes or peat in a cool shady place outside.

Do not attempt to force them; remember what they have gone through. Keep them well watered when the weather becomes warmer. The flowering spikes will soon begin to throw up, but if they are grown in this manner no stakes will be needed. If you want only one spike, pinch the others out, and you will have a majestic spike, and where you want only one spike of flower use the smallest plants and six-inch pots.

The finest campanula pyramidalis I have ever grown carried on an average thirty spikes to each plant, in a batch of over 200. If you keep the old spent flowers picked off, the plants will keep in bloom for months. They are no trouble whatever to grow—in fact they are perfect for any sized garden.—*Network Three*



## Art

# The Greatness of a Minor Art

By QUENTIN BELL

WHETHER the 'Costume Court', Room 40 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, was originally built to house costume I do not know; but it would be hard to find a gallery at once so large and so unsuitable for this purpose. The monstrous dome and the titanic arches fill the hall with an oppressive emptiness beneath which a generous sample of the museum's very fine collection of women's clothes seems dwarfed, isolated, and insignificant. Insignificant it is not and it has been arranged, cared for and adjusted with an intelligence and a taste which deserved more extensive means and a more favourable opportunity. Although, to my mind, the Langley Moore collection, lately at Eridge Castle and soon I believe to find a new home in Brighton, remains the model of how this sort of thing should be done, the present arrangement has much to recommend it and shows a scholarly care for historical exactitude; the cases showing dolls and accessories are of particular interest. Other dresses have still to be brought out of store and eventually one may hope that the interior of the court itself will be drastically remodelled. But already, when the visitor has—so to speak—adjusted his focus, there is much to enjoy.

The collection now on view shows work covering a period which extends, roughly, between 1730 and 1900. The museum is particularly rich in eighteenth-century examples and these are exceptionally beautiful, no other period could so perfectly unite intimacy of detail with grandeur of effect. One is, again and again, amazed by the taste and the invention of these couturiers, although it must be said that these are qualities which persist, to a surprisingly large extent, in the work of the next century. Even in cheap and pretentious creations of the Victorian era one may find astonishing felicities of cut and colour.

This exhibition may be regarded as a display of social history, and as such it is immensely instructive; but it may also be considered simply as a collection of works of art, in which case one cannot but reflect upon the strangely unequal affinity that exists between the dressmaker and the fashionable portrait painter. On the face of it it would seem that they follow the same trade; both are employed to make the client more beautiful and more dignified than she would appear unaided. They use similar devices, colours that flatter, linear arrangements that lead the eye insensibly to incorrect con-

clusions, tricks of scale that serve to magnify one part or to diminish another. The very principle of academic art is closely connected with the art of dressmaking, for the modiste, no less than the painter, must replace the irregularities, the wrinkles, the discolorations of the naked body by a system of padding, remodelling, and discreet though suggestive concealment which substitutes the ideal for the real. And yet, despite this similarity of aims and ends, how different the two arts are in their results.



One of the rearranged show cases in 'Costume Court' at the Victoria and Albert Museum

'*La Mode n'est jamais laide*', said Derain, and although we may sometimes rebel against the prevailing fashion and invariably condemn that which has recently been cast aside, the substantial truth of his apophthegm is borne out by this show, in which there is nothing which is not in some degree charming. Now consider what kind of an exhibition would result from a collection—more or less haphazard as this one is—of works by the lesser imitators of Reynolds, Romney, Shee, Winterhalter, Bonnat and Sargent. How vastly the enormous majority of bad paintings would overshadow the slender minority of good ones.

Must we then conclude that dressmaking is a more valuable art than painting? If we consider the work of the average successful artist, we must; although it is equally clear that if we look for the few, grand, isolated exceptions we must not. This oddity of aesthetics is, I think, explicable if we remember that the quality of a work of art is determined by the quality of the artist's emotion. Dressmaking, like the art of children or the art of peasants, is a shallow vessel; it is not fashioned to hold any great, profound or complicated feelings. A little sincere emotion can fill it to the brim, and a good

craftsman with an enthusiastic feeling for the possibilities of fashion is, within the limits of his art, a sincere artist. There may have been a time when this was true of painting; but, since the Middle Ages at all events, the art has fallen into the hands of giants. In the case of portraiture Titian, Velasquez, and Rembrandt have enlarged the container so enormously that a painter who brings to it that slight volume of feeling that belonged to a Worth or to a Poiret may account himself lucky if he succeeds well

enough to make a sizeable puddle. Inevitably, we judge his achievements not simply by his creative powers but by the pretensions that are implicit in the form of art that he has adopted. And it is also true that the quality of his emotion must itself be affected by the nature of the task that he undertakes. Whereas the milliner, setting himself to create that which he knows to be slight and ephemeral, ends by achieving a little immortality, the painter who attempts to produce a genteel Sickert or a Cézanne that will offend nobody becomes, of necessity, hopelessly insincere. One may see the results any summer's day upon the walls of Burlington House. But it is not only the hacks of the Academy who, in attempting art, fail even to achieve chic. The latest things from Paris and New York are not always hats or shoes.

## Junk Shop Nude

Turned to the wall, out of piety  
Perhaps, or satiation, your breasts undusted,  
As if to disturb them would be to desecrate,  
An act of familiarity intolerable  
To disposers of mere *objets d'art*—  
And the thighs spread against velvet, paint  
Flaked from the *mons*, a source  
Of perpetual unease for eyes used to safer  
Objects of commerce, *chaises-longues*, fenders,  
commodes.

No wonder, islanded in bric-à-brac.  
You feign amusement, fixing on the middle  
distance  
A gaze secretive and ironic, neglect  
An experience comic by its novelty,  
And your lips soften in the smile  
Of one who, marking time, knows loneliness  
A luxury vouchsafed only a little while.  
Even as I look, your body, like a boat,  
Seems throbbing in instinct of new voyages.

ALAN ROSS



# The Listener's Book Chronicle

## Lytton Strachey: his Mind and Art

By Charles R. Sanders. Oxford. 36s.

THIS LIFE OF LYTTON STRACHEY is not at all the sort of book that he himself went in for. On the contrary, it is a commemorative biography of the kind he inveighed—and rebelled—against, complete with all the undiluted praise, the *suppressio veri* and the bulk of a Victorian panegyrist. Yet one cannot doubt that Strachey would have liked it this way. He could hardly have wanted to be treated as he treated others, and though he might not have detected the extent of his elevation on Professor Sanders' pedestal, he would have noted, and appreciated, his biographer's great tact.

Indeed it must be said that Mr. Sanders has done his task in a wholly scholarly way, and so far as it concerns Lytton Strachey's work, as distinct from his life, the book is unlikely to be superseded. Even on the purely biographical level, it contains much interesting information, especially about the Strachey family, which the author traces back to the John Strachey of Sutton Court in Somerset who was the friend of the philosopher Locke. Mr. Sanders dwells on the accomplishments of his hero's father, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Strachey, which were considerable: not only was he a distinguished soldier, he was also an outstanding engineer, administrator, geologist, botanist, and meteorologist. The general was sixty-three when Lytton Strachey was born to his second wife, a woman of marked literary interests. There were strong affinities between mother and son, but Lytton Strachey's education was somewhat unconventional, though he seems to have spent a year or two at a minor public school, Leamington, where he was called 'Scrags' and bullied. He was also for a time at a redbrick university college, Liverpool.

Success did not come easily to him. From Liverpool he attempted but failed to secure a place at Balliol, and went on instead to Trinity, Cambridge. There he impressed his supervisors favourably and became the centre of that talented group which was later known as 'Bloomsbury', but he scored no more than a second class in the History Tripos. In 1903, when he was twenty-three, he applied for a post in the Civil Service but was rejected; he tried next for a fellowship by thesis at Trinity and failed again. Literary journalism proved more hospitable, possibly because he had a cousin who was editor of *The Spectator*, where all his early articles and reviews appeared.

Strachey's first book was *Landmarks in French Literature* which came out in 1912. Though still considered by some to be his best it made at the time small stir in the pool of life. Fame came abruptly to him with the publication in 1918 of his *Eminent Victorians*. He was then thirty-eight. No book could have made a more timely appearance. All the heavy glory of Victorian England had just then fallen shamefully into the mud of Flanders; the young had been cheated and sent in millions to a futile death for the sake of so-called spiritual values, while the profiteers flourished and were alone the victors. Those of the young who survived were too exhausted for overt rebellion; they had

only the weapons of mockery, scorn and contempt; their consolations were laughter and the high-spirited companionship of those who felt as they did. To this particular condition the works of Lytton Strachey spoke most eloquently. What matter if his facts were weak, when he wrote with such wit, and when he made such risible guys of the heroes of the old Establishment? He became a celebrated writer because he tarred and feathered the figures his contemporaries wished to kill.

Like the Angry Young Men of today he had a sociological importance that far outstripped any considerations of literary merit. And yet he had merit: the trouble now, when few people feel as he felt, and many are bitterly against the things he stood for, is that his work has come to be as unjustly traduced as it was once extravagantly praised. Mr. Sanders' transatlantic voice is likely to sound almost as a lone voice, especially as he takes the surprising view that Strachey was an 'impartial' biographer. Strachey was not impartial. In fact, he was not really an historian at all, but essentially a polemicist. For all his seeming calm he was in truth a passionate man, who wrote about such persons as Gordon and Manning, not as an ordinary biographer would, with the idea of relating the history of their lives, but with the idea of using them as coloured illustrations for a single argument, namely the argument that Victorian values were false values, and that the world would do better to return to the tradition of Voltaire and Hume which the nineteenth century had rejected. Judged thus as a moralist, Lytton Strachey deserves a place in the pantheon of English letters, albeit a minor one, among others who were never originators but rather, in the exact sense of that word, reactionaries.

## Letters of Gorky and Andreev

Edited by Peter Yershov.

Routledge and Kegan Paul. 25s.

This book consists of the edited correspondence between Maxim Gorky and Leonid Andreev, comprising in all 101 letters. The originals of most of them belong to the Columbia University Libraries and the majority here appear in print for the first time, although a number have been previously published in Russian.

The collection forms an interesting commentary on two of the most influential Russian authors of the early twentieth century. Gorky, the senior by three years, early revealed his keen scent as a literary talent-scout when he singled out Andreev on the basis of a few immature publications and helped him to become established as a writer. In an assessment which does credit both to the generosity of his heart and to the soundness of his literary judgement, Gorky several times indicates that he considers Andreev a more gifted artist than himself. But it is Gorky's less attractive characteristics which are most evident in this collection—particularly his intolerance, stridency and cultivation of hatred as an important source of the writer's inspiration, together with that loathing of liberals, shopkeepers and intellectuals (*intelligenty*), which was with him an article of faith.

(Offering to lend Gorky his house in Finland, Andreev includes the bait: 'It is beautiful here and non-intellectual, there are only Finns'.)

Andreev, represented here in a much smaller number of letters, is not characterised with equal clarity, but comes off the better in the quarrel-some exchanges that eventually drove the two friends apart and which form the most interesting section of this correspondence. The quarrel with Gorky was not due to the fact that Andreev was a typical Russian *intelligent*, liberal or shopkeeper, but rather to his insistence on putting the personal life of the individual on a more important plane than the political. In Andreev, Gorky—by now a man of harsh and rigid political convictions—would have liked to find at least a potential revolutionary ally, whereas what Andreev wanted from Gorky was the maintenance of their once intimate friendship. When Andreev wrote pleading for greater frankness between Gorky and himself, he found himself sluiced with a fountain of characteristically Gorkyesque verbal sewage:

To display your scabs to the world, to rub them in public and be bathed in pus, to spatter the eyes of others with your bile, as many do (and as our evil genius Fyodor Dostoyevsky did most repulsively of all)—this is a base business, and harmful of course.

With an occasional lapse the letters have been well translated and edited and furnished with a useful commentary.

## Frederick II of Hohenstaufen

By Georgina Masson.

Secker and Warburg. 35s.

Few eminent figures of medieval Europe are more notorious than the Emperor Frederick II, *Stupor Mundi*, the Wonder of the World. In a sense, therefore, Miss Masson has set herself to re-tell a familiar story. There is, however, freshness and life in her singularly attractive biography of the greatest enemy ever encountered by the medieval Papacy, and the ruler who more than any other of his contemporaries can be regarded as the apostle of the new political order which was to wreck the medieval world. Miss Masson guides us easily and with authority from Frederick's forlorn childhood in Sicily and then on into Germany, and, again, up to the beginnings of the struggle with the Papacy which sought to prevent the consequences of a union between these two realms. Thence we move to Palestine where the excommunicated emperor leads the Crusade, and so back again to the West, to the short-lived imperial triumph and the ultimate imperial defeat. The whole is well described and based upon original authorities.

If, however, as is claimed, Miss Masson has drawn on 'a wealth of contemporary sources never before tapped', it is a pity that these were not indicated by fuller documentation. Nor does she always escape partiality. Frederick, by his centralised administration of Sicily, certainly placed himself 'in advance of his age'. Undoubtedly, too, in the 'Constitutions of Melfi' and elsewhere he foreshadowed the rise of the centralised absolute state. But perhaps some of those who in our own days have watched the modern state in action may be tempted to re-



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KATE O'BRIEN

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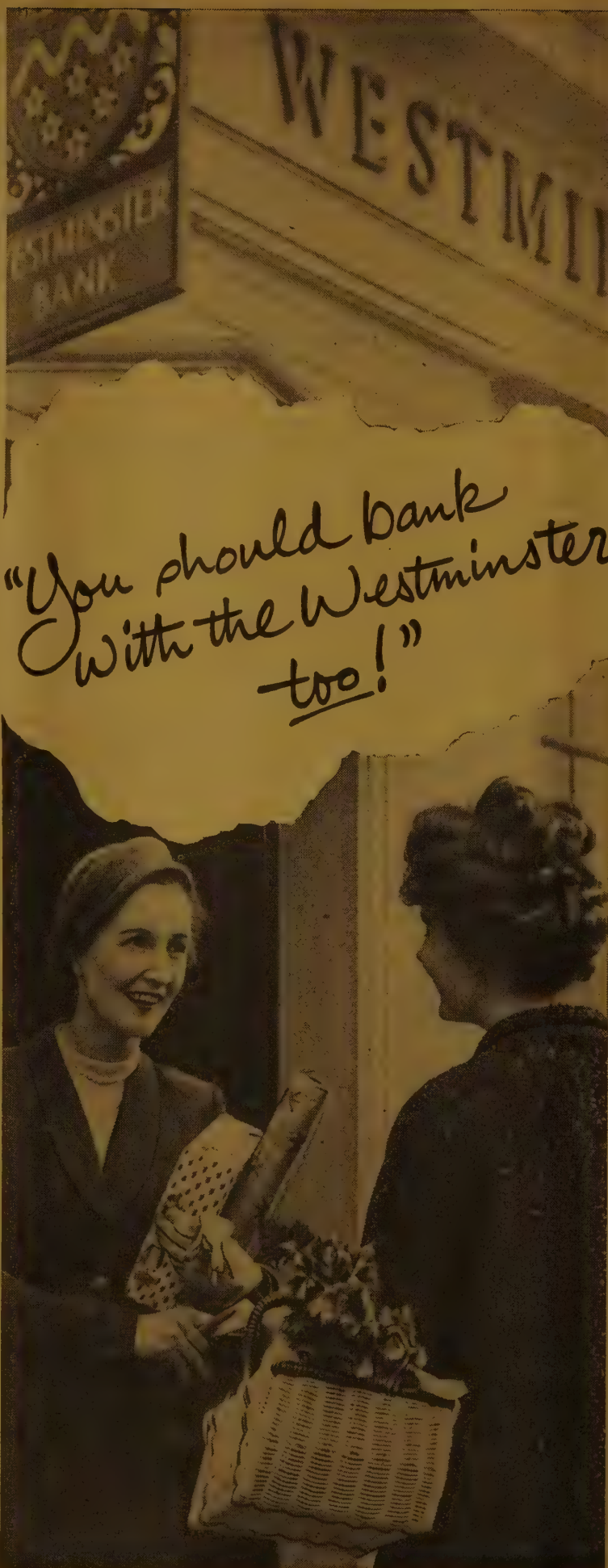
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gard the circumstances of its origin with only limited enthusiasm.

The real distinction of Miss Masson's book—and it is a high one—lies less in describing political processes which are well known, than in providing a challenging portrait of one of the most colourful personalities known to history. Frederick, whose Norman ancestry was strong within him, was heir to that strange Sicilian culture of the twelfth century which was at once Latin, Greek, and Arabic. His vigorous intellect throve from such roots and produced the paradoxes of his career. He was a Christian Emperor with a profound admiration for Islam, a sceptic who was convinced of the semi-divine quality of his own royalty. He went to regain the Holy Places with an oriental harem as part of his retinue, and returned from his wars to patronise scholarship and the arts and to play a significant part in the growth of medical education. He was a sensitive art critic and on occasion brutally cruel. And while he achieved a new type of absolutism, he also composed a treatise on falconry which can rank as an original contribution to natural history. Such contrasts are hard to reconcile, but Miss Masson, none the less, imparts actuality to her portrait. Her success is primarily due to her intimate first-hand knowledge of the Italian background to Frederick's life. Her treatment of the Emperor's castles is thus particularly impressive, and it may be seemly to take leave of her hero as he exercises his falcons over the windy Apulian plains surrounding the Castel del Monte, or as he broods at sunset in the gaunt Castel Lagopesole, looking across the wild countryside towards that rugged volcanic outline of the Vultures' Mountain.

### The Natural Philosophy of Love

By Rémy de Gourmont.

Neville Spearman. 16s.

The title-page prints the name of Ezra Pound, the translator, in larger type than the name of Gourmont, the author, and it seems probable that the publishers have intended this reprint for the scholiasts who find 'The Cantos' an inexhaustible terrain: here is another source-book. Or is it offered as a component of 'Kulchur', an item to stand in the Poundian reading-lists with Confucius, Dante, Golding, Frobenius, Gesell, and the other few books 'a sane man will enjoy'? The reprint is welcome, whatever its purpose, if it draws attention to Rémy de Gourmont, one of the civilisers who seems temporarily forgotten. The gloomy offices of the *Mercur* light up as we watch him, in Léautaud's *Journal*, drop in of an afternoon to talk with Valette and the others. That clarity, intellectual rigour and sensuous wisdom suffered a regression, one sees now, when the tradition passed to Rivière and Gide at the *N.R.F.* It was in 1913 that the name of Gourmont first appeared in Pound's *Letters* and by 1918 he had become a weapon in the attack which Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot were then making on what we now call the Establishment. Pound's Gourmont, as Mr. Espey suggests in his study of 'Mauberley', was not quite the same as Eliot's. Whereas Eliot found Gourmont's technique of 'dissociation' invaluable when he was writing 'The Sacred Wood', Pound was stimulated by Gourmont's 'conception of love, passion, emotion as an intellectual instigation'. Thus, in due course, Pound's translation of *Physique de*

*L'Amour* was published by the Casanova Society as if it were a specimen of *erotica*.

Pound called it 'a text book of biology', but Gourmont described it as an '*essai sur l'instinct sexuel*' which has the merit of accuracy and does not claim too much; on the other hand, Gourmont's use of scientific terminology scarcely prepares the reader for the mischievous, Ovidian gaiety which shimmers on every page. Perhaps this may be attributed to Pound's verve as translator. Occasionally the shade of Robert Burton seems not very far away as this ballet of monstrous copulations—the whale, the hippopotamus, the stag-beetle, and a hundred others—is danced out to the choreographic patterns of the old-fashioned naturalists, Buffon, Linnaeus, Bonnet, and De Paw. Is the book lewd? 'There is no lewdness', Gourmont observes, 'which has not its normal type in nature somewhere'. What, then, is the book's purpose? 'One becomes more discreet', he suggests, 'when one contemplates the prodigious pattern of the erotic habits of the animal world, and even entirely incompetent to decide flatly whether a fact is natural or unnatural'. Here is the humanist discretion, the same un-solemn acceptance of things as they are which we find in Montaigne's 'On Some Verses of Virgil' or Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath'.

### Survey of London Vol. XXVII. Spitalfields and Mile End New Town.

Edited by F. H. W. Sheppard.

Athlone Press. 50s.

The first volume of the Survey of London came out in 1900. It dealt with the parish of Bromley-by-Bow. The editor and promoter was C. R. Ashbee, an architectural and social reformer, Ruskinite and Morrisite who ran a workshop and private press in Whitechapel and built houses at Chelsea. The plan was then to publish volumes for the East End only and include much in Essex and Middlesex. In addition monographs on individual buildings were to come out, and indeed did come out, nine between the first and the second volumes of the Survey proper. By then the editor was Philip Norman and the architectural investigator Mr. Walter Godfrey to whom more than to any other the continuity of the venture to the present day is due.

The arrangement was revised so that the L.C.C. published the volumes and made itself responsible for the preparation of every second volume, the others remaining in the hands of the Survey Committee. Till 1952, twenty-four volumes were thus brought out, containing, for instance, the whole of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, St. Margaret Westminster, St. Pancras, and Chelsea. Then it became clear that the Survey Committee could no longer cope with the heavy commitments involved, and the L.C.C. shouldered the responsibility entirely. The editor is now Mr. F. H. W. Sheppard, and among the investigators there are Mr. W. A. Eden and Mr. Walter Ison, the latter author of two outstandingly good and complete books on the Georgian architecture of Bath and Bristol. The publisher is the Athlone Press of the University of London.

Now, in the volume on Christ Church, Spitalfields and surroundings, a new decision is announced. The Survey will in future confine itself to Westminster, St. Marylebone, Holborn, and parts of Stepney. Southwark, Lambeth, St.

Pancras, and Chelsea, it must be remembered, are complete. Yet this is a regrettable decision. If work under it is speeded up, as it seems to be (volumes 24-27 in 1952-57), may it not be revised later, and may not Kensington at least be reinstated? For the City, in any case, we have only the volume of the Royal Commission which stops at 1714 and the volumes of *The Buildings of England* which are not an inventory strictly speaking.

The new volume of the Survey is an exemplar of its kind. Its centre piece is, of course, Hawksmoor's majestic and wilful Christ Church. For its history unknown documents and unknown drawings are used. The latter prove that the portico of Balbek type was an afterthought of Hawksmoor's. As for domestic building, there is a great variety of interest. The Spital Square—Fournier Street neighbourhood, dates from c. 1720-30 and was once well-to-do. Surprisingly fine interiors are illustrated, many of them, alas, from old photographs owing to the destruction of the originals. Then there are the Great Synagogue built as a French Non-Conformist chapel, Truman's Brewery, the Bishopsgate Goods Station, replacing the Eastern Counties Shore-ditch terminal of 1839-42 (not mentioned in Professor Meeks' book), and the slums, the common lodging houses, the early attempts at Model Dwellings (Deal Street 1848-50), the earliest of all Peabody Buildings (1863), and even such freaks as the Moorish Royal Cambridge Music Hall. Care in the preparation and accurate documentation are as impeccable for Hawksmoor's as for any minor and demolished Victorian church. The index is extensive. Users will find in it so humane a name as the Soup Ladling Society and so inhuman a one as Jack the Ripper.

### The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century. By Kenneth Ellis.

Oxford. 25s.

In this monograph on the eighteenth-century Post Office Dr. Ellis describes for the first time exactly how the correspondence which European powers obligingly conducted through the ordinary post with their representatives in London was regularly intercepted and read by the British Government.

The practice of intercepting correspondence, originally based on the prerogative, was put on a statutory footing by the Post Office Act of 1711. Thenceforth inland mail was intercepted, at any rate in theory, only on an express warrant from a Secretary of State naming the correspondent, and was opened in the private office of the Secretary of the Post Office. Foreign mail was intercepted by an under-cover organisation, known as the Secret Office, housed in the Post Office but responsible to the Secretaries of State, and authorised by general warrants to copy all diplomatic correspondence. The salaries of its staff, and also of a separate Deciphering Branch, were paid by the Secretary of the Post Office from secret service funds. In 1742 the combined staffs of the Secret Office and the Deciphering Branch totalled ten and cost £4,500; in 1801 the figures had risen to thirteen and £6,500.

For over a third of the century the machinery for intercepting correspondence was controlled by Anthony Todd, an able civil servant, who rose from the ranks to be head of the Secret Office and Secretary of the Post Office, feather-



ing his nest to such purpose that he was in a position to marry his daughter to the heir of the 7th Earl of Lauderdale with a portion of £30,000 and to leave her a fortune of about £80,000. Most of the skilled openers, engravers of counterfeit seals, and translators were Hanoverians, notably the Bode family, of whom no less than four, father and sons, were at one time employed in Todd's organisation. The chief decipherer for nearly sixty years was the Reverend Edward Willes, Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1743 to 1773, of whom Walpole said that he knew so many secrets that he might have insisted on being made Archbishop. Willes was assisted by his three sons and after his death the branch was practically monopolised by his descendants till it was abolished in 1844.

Throughout the eighteenth century foreign governments and diplomats in London continued to correspond through the post, though the House of Commons report on Walpole's use of secret service funds published full details of the staffs of the Secret Office and the Deciphering Branch. The only complaint to which interception gave rise came from business men, who could not understand why mail which had arrived early in the morning was not available till next day. The explanation of course was that it took some hours for the Secret Office to deal with the diplomatic correspondence and that for obvious reasons it was impossible to release the ordinary mail till the diplomats had received theirs.

The end of the Secret Office was brought about not by its own activities but by an outcry aroused by the disclosure that the Home Secretary, on representations from the Austrian Government, had been intercepting Mazzini's letters. In the course of the ensuing enquiry it emerged that the Act of 1711 authorised only express as distinct from general warrants, and that the activities of the Secret Office had therefore no legal basis. In these circumstances the Government had no alternative but to stop the interception of diplomatic correspondence and to abolish the Secret Office and the Deciphering Branch. The interception of inland correspondence on express warrants from the Home Secretary, which had given rise to the trouble, was allowed to continue as before.

Interception is only one of many aspects of the eighteenth-century Post Office treated by Dr. Ellis. He gives a most interesting account of the Parliamentary privilege of franking, which by the end of the century was worth £1,300 a year to each of eighteen banks represented in the House of Commons, 'a sufficient inducement for any banker to get into Parliament'. About the same time the practice of franking newspapers by bulk orders from Members of Parliament attained such dimensions that the free transmission of newspapers became universal. The book is a first-rate piece of historical research, but unfortunately it is written in so condensed and cryptic a style that it practically requires deciphering itself.

### The Last Paradise. By Helmut Handrick. Oliver and Boyd. 45s.

Towns, factories, and power stations are everywhere invading the country and pushing back the frontiers of wild nature. Even more destructive are the town dwellers whom the encroachments bring into the quiet places—people

ignorant of the country who either wilfully or ignorantly despoil it. *The Last Paradise* is written by one who appreciates and loves the country and who hopes that his book will enable some readers to recover a seeing eye for the riches of nature and 'to feel the need to learn, from what we have seen of this threatened world, a true conception of our own place in the creation'.

The Paradise is an ancient private estate on the edge of the industrial Ruhr in Germany; it consists of woods, glades, clearings, and boggy meadows surrounding an ancient moated *schloss* now derelict and abandoned because mining subsidence endangers the foundations. A keeper still goes his rounds to protect the domain from devastation by thoughtless vandals. The author describes the changing face of nature in his Paradise through the seasons of the year in a quiet, unassuming style that gently unfolds his story of patient observation. But it is as a picture-book that the volume excels—it is lavishly illustrated with very beautiful colour-photographs of plants, birds, insects and other creatures. The quarto size of the book gives opportunity for the printing of some very impressive pictures, three or four times natural size, of butterflies, flowers, and even some of the smaller birds.

Throughout this charming book the author pleads for a less destructive attitude towards nature; 'when we pass flowery meadows which have been thoughtlessly trampled on, the homes of animals destroyed, and eggs wantonly broken, we too feel the guilt of those whose soul is dead although they wear a human face'. And at the end he reiterates, 'It is indeed a scathing indictment of us men that laws and penalties should have to be imposed to protect the world of dumb creatures from us'.

### High Arctic. By M. Banks. Dent. 25s.

This is the personal story of a member of the British North Greenland Expedition (1952-54). The official narrative of this ambitious and extensive expedition has been told elsewhere—the airlift to east Greenland, the establishment of station Northice in the centre of the ice-cap, the crossing from east to west, the geophysical research, and the dropping of many tons of stores from aeroplanes to the land parties.

Captain Banks led one of the teams of snow-tractors—'weasels'—that crossed the vast Greenland ice-cap, a journey of some 800 miles 'across a barren, utterly featureless, desert of snow and ice'. Particularly revealing are his candid yet humorous observations on his fellow explorers when subjected to the boredom of the long, totally dark, winters in the base hut, and his descriptions of the lives led by four men cooped up in a small sledge caravan or tent in the wilderness and loneliness of the ice-cap. 'If your personality is quite antagonistic to that of another member (though in your own way you are both good chaps) you will very soon work up a strong abhorrence of him. . . . My particular *bête noire* in the base hut could not walk, eat, talk, or even sleep without my finding him insufferable—and he found me much the same'. On the other hand after a very narrow escape from death and disaster when a weasel and several trailers fell down a 120-foot crevasse, luckily getting wedged forty feet down, 'the accident seemed to draw us closer together, and a very warm and friendly atmosphere pervaded

the team then and during the days that followed'. The author's friend, Lieutenant Erskine, contributes four chapters to the book, one on the sensational crash of an R.A.F. Hastings aircraft on the ice-cap and the rescue of the crew by the Americans flying from the fabulous air base at Thule.

The author and his friend have notably succeeded in giving the atmosphere and spirit of the expedition. They write feelingly but quite objectively, and have produced a book well deserving of its Book Society recommendation.

### Dictionary of Russian Literature

By William E. Harkins.

Allen and Unwin. 30s.

Mr. Harkins has produced a very useful book. It is in form a work of reference containing essays of graded length on all Russian writers of importance, on general topics such as Russian criticism and Russian philosophy, on all important literary periods and trends, and on movements of thought such as Slavophilism, Nihilism, and Populism which have a strong bearing on literature. As an encyclopedia it is admirably designed, and having been executed reliably and with a sense of proportion, will do good service as such. But it is worth recommending as something more than this. It can easily be read, along lines explained in its preface, as an introduction to Russian literature in general, and thus becomes doubly useful.

Although the author has wisely not made it his main aim to break new critical ground, he has not been afraid to voice critical opinions of his own on appropriate occasion, or to take sides, intelligently and modestly, on a controversial point. Under 'Gogol', for example, he comes down decisively against those who regard that writer as a 'realist' or as a major influence on the Russian novel. Again, in his essay on 'Realism' he has not fought shy of that crucial problem-word of Russian literature, but has treated it in an illuminating manner, and is to be contrasted with critics who have inclined to use this and kindred terms in a spirit more incantational than analytical.

### A Winter Talent and other Poems

By Donald Davie.

Routledge and Kegan Paul. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Donald Davie disarms the critic by the very title of his new collection, *A Winter Talent*. But he attempts a group of poems on Italy, and the apostle of neutral tones simply cannot manage Italy: what he says in this section of his book is trite and dull. He is more successful when he takes his own self-appointed limitations as his theme, as in the poem characteristically called 'Limited Achievement', which ends:

Successful in his single narrow track,  
He branches out, but only to collapse,  
Imprisoned in his own unhappy knack,  
Which, when unailing, fails him most, perhaps.

These precise, deprecatory, rather charming poems manage in the modern way to be their own criticisms (their author is a don), and leave the reviewer with little to do but agree with the estimate, enjoy Mr. Davie's wit, purity of diction, etc., and regret an age which has so cheapened and violated passion as to make it, in Mr. Davie's (let us hope mistaken) view, an unfit subject for art.





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# CRITIC ON THE HEARTH

Weekly comments on B.B.C. programmes by independent contributors

Television Broadcasting

## DOCUMENTARY

### Too Many 'Regulars'

FROM TIME TO TIME it must, I fear, be all too apparent that I have experienced some difficulty in finding programmes to discuss. It is then that the eye strays waywardly to other channels, as it were, and one wonders whether there is not some fruitful comparison to be drawn between rival firms. In this mood I turned this week to *Television in Britain*, the latest PEP booklet, an absorbing statistical appraisal of the present viewing situation in all its aspects, and it was with something of a shock that I read:

Documentary programmes are given very much more time on the B.B.C. than ITV. The B.B.C. devotes more time to the documentary type of programme than to almost any other category, and its output is generally three or four times as great as that of ITV.

Let no man call himself unfortunate. In the week ending February 15 of this year, whereas there were two hours forty-five minutes of documentary output on Independent Television (in London, that is; there was less elsewhere) on B.B.C. Television there were no less than nine hours ten minutes, states the booklet.

All I can say is, where does it get to? It is significant that in spite of this disparity, 'ITV's current affairs and topical discussion programmes far exceed those of the B.B.C.'. I was tuned in the other day to an interesting discussion on ITV between Mr. Michael Foot and some extremely bright schoolchildren, in 'Youth Wants to Know', on whether Britain should relinquish the use of the hydrogen bomb. Half way through I noticed it was time for 'Tonight', so I dutifully switched over: they were investigating the by-laws concerning parks, in particular whether or not you could take a pig into one. Now I am, with one or two reservations about the standard of interviewing, a firm fan of 'Tonight', but I do wonder whether its flair for the facetious and the trivial is not being developed at the expense of more urgent matters.

Incidentally, the figures quoted above include 'Tonight', and I suppose that where the great amount of time gets to, in fact, is in those long-standing series which a critic tends to pass over, not because they are not good but because they have been written about so much already. There remain but a limited number of ways in which one can describe the impact of the regulars, even of such inexhaustible

figures as Mr. Dimbleby and Miss Heal.

I watched both of them, as it happens, on the same evening a Monday ago, and both were undeniably in form. Mr. Dimbleby was in Holland for the royal visit, but he was also managing to compete 'Panorama' from there, even though only one of the items (an uninhibited interview with some extremely bright Dutch schoolchildren about their knowledge of Britain) came from across the water; other topics, a collection of antique clocks, and the nuisance caused by foaming detergents whose foam won't lie down after it has gurgled away down the sink and into the drains and on to purling brooks and majestic streams, were all home-bred. Miss Heal also had with her two extremely bright English schoolchildren, boy and girl, and a woman doctor who has been a pioneer in the use of a mosaic-pattern test to reveal aptitudes and characteristics. The children did the test and then the expert interpreted the results in such a way as to quell utterly any scepticism one may have had about its potentialities. She was brilliant about both of them.

One longed, indeed, to begin fiddling with the bits oneself. Miss Heal's late-night programmes are usually rather a soothing nightcap, but this one was agreeably stimulating instead.

From psychology to surgery: the sixth and seventh programmes of 'Your Life in Their Hands', the series of outside broadcasts from hospitals, have taken us to the Sully Hospital in Glamorgan to hear about the conquest of tuberculosis and to the Royal Infirmary, Bristol, to observe how diseases of the liver may be cured by operation. Here, again, one is disinclined to comment simply because the series has been going now for some time, and it is doing its job thoroughly and efficiently. The form of each programme has become fixed: an introduction to the hospital itself, a theoretical outline of the disease by its leading physicians, a brief talk with a patient suffering from it, and then, with a careful warning to switch down the vision for those who do not want to see, the operation that it is hoped will cure it. Though one now feels one's inside to be slightly less of a mystery than it was, I do not regard this as being the series' main object or its justification, which lies in the exhilarating insight it has given into medical skill in some of its most impressive forms.

And so, to find something in the documentary output this week that has not been in progress



Richard Dimbleby interviewing Dutch schoolchildren in 'Panorama' on Monday, March 24

for some time already, one is reduced to one solitary mid-week half-hour with the appetising title of 'Head Hunters and Giraffe Women', and a most intriguing half-hour it was at that. One saw a film made by the French explorer, Vitold de Golish, when he was on an expedition for two years in Upper Burma, studying some still surviving tribal customs. As David Attenborough, who narrated and produced, told us, he lived with the Naga head hunters, a people whose ruthlessness seems matched only by their remarkable grace, with the Kayahs whose womenfolk encase their legs with twined bamboo from an early age in imitation of the legs of elephants which they worship, and thus encumbered they dance with the lightness of a ballerina. At the grand climax came the explorer's discovery of the giraffe women for whom prestige takes this curiously visible form of spirals of copper wound round their necks, the longer the better. Infidelity is punished by their removal which, the bones having wasted over the years, leaves the head without a support. Look back in anger.

ANTHONY CURTIS

## DRAMA

### Unhappy Family

'BACKGROUND', by W. Chetham-Strode, had a run at the Westminster Theatre in 1950. It revived well on the screen (March 27). This dramatist has several times shown us that he is not concerned merely with personal relations: he likes a theme. So the triangle of John Lomax, successful barrister, Barbara Lomax, neglected and in some matters neglectful wife, and Bill Ogden, sympathetic business man with a farm in Dorset, is not just the matter of a cuckoo-in-the-nest story: if one called it the cause for a sermon, that might suggest a dullish form of edification. But there is no dullness in Mr. Chetham-Strode's commendable warning that a broken marriage, where there are children of a sensitive age, can be a social iniquity and gravely unkind to the defenceless young in need of a solid, domestic, enduring background.

The trouble comes because John Lomax is self-centred, obsessed with his career, tactless and sharp of tongue. Michael Gwynn, cast for this part, is an actor of natural gentleness as well as of great skill. I could not believe that Lomax, thus presented, was the tetchy Lomax of the play: in vain did Mr. Gwynn try to be



Leg adornments made of twined bamboo worn by Kayah women and (right) a giraffe woman wearing spirals of copper round her neck, shown in 'Head Hunters and Giraffe Women' on March 26



unpleasant: no wife could possibly have found him anything but a dear. Joyce Heron, as the wife, gave a most persuasive picture of exasperation leading to distress. But the part as written does not give sufficient cause for her husband's exasperation with her. Admittedly she does forget things, but would the sweetly reasonable husband that Michael Gwynn embodies be so much put out by faults so small? Another unlikeliness is the way in which Lomax trusts his son with fire-arms; the boy, disgusted with the invasive Ogden, resolves at last on violent measures; fortunately he is not likely to have won a medal at Bisley and only scores an 'outer' at close range.

But these criticisms do not at all invalidate general approval of the author's power to tell a story and his good sense in maintaining that divorce is a desperate measure where a young family is involved. Cavan Kendall as



'Background' on March 27 with (left to right) Joyce Heron as Barbara Lomax, Michael Gwynn as John Lomax, Mavis Sage as Jess, Cavan Kendall as Adrian, and Ingrid Sylvester as Linda



The stage feast in the programme on March 26 in the second series of 'Early to Braden'

the distracted boy was most moving and Lilly Kann, as the prop of the nursery and school-room, was a nice figure of warm sanity.

British Drama League audiences have for some time been agreeably familiar with the rail-side (and prize-winning) drolleries of T. C. Thomas' 'Davy Jones'. Davy is a Welsh signalman who, being somewhat under-employed in his rural cabin, once more proves that Satan will find some mischief still. But only minor mischief; no sinister vice is at large among the railwaymen; there may be just a little poaching or some betting-slip manoeuvres.

The latter made the substance of 'Davy Jones' Clock', which chimed for half-an-hour on March 25. Jack Walters made Davy himself a nicely harassed scamp while Harriet Lewis used facial expression most effectively without over-playing the grimace. The production, from the Welsh studio, by David J. Thomas, was helpful on the whole, but I fancy that some of the widespread audience which television reaches may have found the Welsh accents and intonations rather baffling. The next time that we are visiting Uncle Davy's Cabin care should be taken, while preserving the essential Welshness, to have every word spoken clearly as an aid to non-Cymric ears.

The clang of passing trains rang out realistically again in 'Sammy' (March 26). The scene was a vast attic near a London terminus. The event was a forty-minute solo perform-

ance. Much, therefore, was demanded of the soloist, and Anthony Newley gave all that was asked. His one-man (plus telephone) sketch, extremely well written and produced by Ken Hughes, showed us a 'wide boy' financially cornered by creditors of the razor-slashing type who present their bills in person. Sammy is a kind of dealer who buys anything here to sell it there, and we watched him desperately ringing up other traders in order to get the ready money which alone can satisfy his visitors. It is a race with time—and razors.

The result was in part a virtuoso performance on the telephone. The locality might have been labelled Seventy-Seven Dials. One thing that came across was the efficiency of the Post Office in getting all Sammy's countless calls with such speed and certainty. (The G.P.O. might use this piece for purposes of publicity.) More important was the authenticity of Mr. Newley's 'wide-boy' accent: he had a good script and spoke it according to its deserts. Result, horror in a London heat-wave, blood and sweat and slashes. The police knew nothing of Sammy's fate; but my attention was smartly arrested.

Earlier in the same evening the tele-recorded 'Dinah Shore Show', with Frank Sinatra, set a notable example of slick, vigorous and perfectly timed projection of a Show Business half-hour. The intense professionalism of the Americans makes some of our items of this kind seem casual and clumsy. Mr. Sinatra, when songful, does not

set my heart throbbing, but his comedy, neatly partnering that of Dinah Shore, was first rate. Later on came 'Early to Braden' with, for my taste, far too little Braden. He had competent allies and the session in a dentist's chair made some novel jabs at one's sense of humour. But much of this programme has become conformist. Braden is not a man to be put in harness. He is what the Elizabethans called 'an antic': let him 'anticise'.

IVOR BROWN

## Sound Broadcasting

### DRAMA

#### Short Measure

WHATEVER DIFFERENCES of opinion there are about the place of stage plays in broadcast drama, no one would wish to deny that radio and theatre do a lot for one another. Anybody's list of memorable and enjoyable plays and performances on the air in recent

months must surely contain a fair proportion of stage favourites. And we owe the stage productions in this country of the early Anouilh plays and some of Ugo Betti's, to say nothing of such new native theatrical playwriting talent as Robert Bolt's, to the taste and initiative of the B.B.C. Drama Department.

But, on the radio side, does this interest in living theatre go far and wide enough? There is a few minutes' general conversation about one new play each week by 'The Critics' and an occasional talk on a drama subject or personality in the Third; not much more. If Bernard Miles is putting up the first theatre to be built in the City of London for three centuries and more, if Sam Wanamaker has recently established a thriving centre for drama at Liverpool, if there was a royal opening for the fine new civic stage at Coventry last week, the national broadcasting services took little or no notice. Will they do much more for the Stratford Birthday celebrations in April, the Moscow Art Theatre's visit in May, and the drama side of the Edinburgh Festival in August? It seems doubtful.

Contrast this with continental treatment of the international season (which extends over four to six months of the year, up to about the end of July) of the Theatre of the Nations in Paris, in which seventeen countries are due to take



A scene from the Welsh play 'Davy Jones' Clock' on March 25, with (left to right) Emrys Leyshon as Sergeant Richards, Jack Walters as Davy Jones, Harriet Lewis as Liza Hargest, Jack Newmark as Potter, and Gareth Jones as P.C. Prosser







part this year. According to the International Theatre Institute's excellent quarterly, *World Theatre*, the first such season, last year, was given three hours of broadcasting time each week. There were in 1957 altogether thirty weekly broadcasts and a total of 472 broadcasts devoted to the Théâtre of the Nations. What would be the comparable B.B.C. score for 1957?

The English theatre, and even the London stage, is not, unfortunately, so internationally minded, and our first National Theatre remains, to our shame, unbuilt. All the more reason why, on its cultural and artistic merits alone, the enterprise of Peter Daubeny in bringing over such companies as the Renaud-Barrault and Théâtre National Populaire, the Berliner Ensemble and Moscow Arts, should have strong backing from the B.B.C. in the way of preparation and explication of the foreign plays to be performed in foreign languages.

But there is another and, it seems to me, equally important need that is not being met by the B.B.C. We are just beginning the year's drama festivals in various European countries. It is hardly too much to say that these go almost unreported in this country, though a great deal of interest to anyone seriously concerned with good drama is to be found in them. The B.B.C. could, if it chose, make the insular English theatre-going public more internationally minded, with beneficial results on the range of plays that could be staged here without stiff subsidies and on public interest in the productions of important foreign plays in which the Third Programme still specialises. At present most listeners have little incentive to listen to a first broadcast of a play by, say, Audiberti or Ghelderode.

A short week for criticism before Easter produced only two items that seem to call for comment. William Golding's 'Pincher Martin', in the Third on Sunday, showed the author of 'Lord of the Flies' again concerned with savagery through shipwreck and talking totems. The piece was a soliloquy by a drowned sailor, with snatches of recollected conversations, on the last barren rock of selfishness his sinking soul could imagine, a modern 'Everyman' without Good Deeds or any redeeming feature to make us feel for him. Give me Robert Ardrey's 'Thunder Rock' any day. Well as Alan Badel got his hooks into Pincher, Mr. Golding went down for the Third.

If Brecht could switch 'The Beggar's Opera' to Soho, Caryl Brahms could take it further (and fare worse) with her East-End-kid version 'The Little Beggars' (it is only fair to add that this has just been well received in its B.B.C. television adaptation). If Hollywood makes a hit with a Negro version of 'Carmen', Miss Brahms comes up (last Christmas) with a Negro 'Cindy-Ella'. To switch a spiritual to a coach-chorus ('Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin' for to carry her there') struck me then as a new low. 'Bigger Beggars' in the Home Service last week, a turmoil of teddy-types in New Cross, yielded a Brahms cradle-song version of the same long-suffering spiritual ('Swing soft that cradle mother, Swing it from your apron strings') which strikes me as swinging it even lower. My sympathies were with a loyal cast who seemed to find it tough going. 'I've gotten tired of this performance' someone indiscreetly said towards the end of 'Cindy-Ella', and 'Bigger Beggars' was wearisome, too.

ROY WALKER

## THE SPOKEN WORD

### The Real Things

A WEEK ago last Sunday the Home Service broadcast a documentary called 'The March Retreat'. This marked the fortieth anniversary of the German offensive which, beginning at

dawn on March 21, 1918, drove the British back across the Somme towards Amiens. Apart from a few historical interpolations, the programme consisted simply of personal statements by men who took part in the fighting. After rumours, counter-rumours, intelligence muddles, the attack began at dawn with a five-hour bombardment along the whole British Third and Fifth Army front: 'a solid curtain of flame'. The noise, the confusion, the almost medieval closeness of the fighting that followed, the tiredness and the courage did not have to be reconstructed for us: it all spoke for itself—the description of what must have been one of the last cavalry charges made in Europe; a man's account of how, in the split second before the bullet hit him, he looked down upon his own body: in every voice, and in General Gough's *envoi*, we heard again, almost unbearably, 'the bugles calling from sad shires'. One felt that every living man spoke also for a hundred who died. It cannot now be long before the first world war passes finally into history: meanwhile, these recollections need no commentary.

'The March Retreat' was pure documentary, exalted by its subject alone. The only thing that mattered was that these men had been there, that they were still alive, and that they were now speaking. Authenticity can go no further: indeed, only on radio can it go as far. I felt this to such an extent that when Sir Herbert Read spoke some extracts from his own book about the fighting—in which, of course, he took part—they seemed, fine though they were as prose, oddly out of place. What we need, as long as we can get it—and there can't be too much of it—is the living experience, the raw material. After all, the artist, like the historian, goes on record automatically.

From the English in France to 'Verlaine in England' (Third, March 25) takes us back another forty years and, necessarily, to another kind of documentary: historical reconstruction, dubbed voices. All right for the dead, but what is this curious convention whereby when you are quoting the written words of a living person one voice says 'Dr. Enid Starkie writes . . .' and another, female this time, gives us the actual quotation. Are we supposed to be pretending that Dr. Starkie is really there? But in general, by using Verlaine's own letters and poems wherever he could, Terence Tiller brought the hapless poet endearingly to life and gave us a fascinating and sympathetic account of his sojourns in England, which both enriched his art and prolonged his life.

The artistic legacy of these visits is scattered through the works: a handful of English titles standing out oddly above the French text—'London Bridge', 'Streets', 'Fog', etc.; some familiar subscriptions—Soho, Paddington, Bournemouth; and some evocations of gas-lit Victorian London—'Qu'en dis-tu, voyageur, des pays et des gares?'—more haunting and authentic than anything then being written in English. Incidentally, early in the programme Verlaine was made to mispronounce 'Lei-ces-ter Square' as four syllables, though he certainly knew the correct pronunciation when he used the place in his poem 'Fog'. He first came here in 1872, escaping with Rimbaud from domesticity, and lived, among other places, in what his latest French editor calls 'Camden Town'. His last visit was over twenty years later when, poor, tired, and ill, he came to give some lectures arranged by his English admirers. One of these was at Oxford, with whose venerable arches the poet was delighted, though he actually lectured in a room behind Blackwell's. A year or two later he died in France. Abandoned in his own country, he had found peace here.

'Running Hot and Cold' (Home, March 24) was one of those off-beat features from a world half-way between reality and fantasy hitherto

chiefly explored in sound by John Mortimer. It was written by Harold Wilshaw who, by the simple expedient of taking all the things that might go wrong in a hotel in, say, a year—a guest dies, another sets the place on fire, the chef under notice sabotages lunch—and making them all happen in a single day, produced a charming and enjoyable extravaganza. The producer was Robert Pocock, who also compiled 'The March Retreat'.

K. W. GRANSDEN

## MUSIC

### English Character in Music

THE INQUIRY into the English character in music which Dr. Geoffrey Bush has set going in 'Music Magazine' bids fair to lead him into the more curious and unexplored by-ways of historical research and to prove exciting for us who simply sit tight and listen while he does the hard work.

The subject is fascinating for us in this country, while for our friends on the Continent and in America, those who have the patience to go along with us, the whole question is one long bewilderment; especially for the tidy minded who like things to be docketed according to schools and systems. What possible link they ask is there between a Bax and a Britten, what do they share that can be separated out from their music and called specifically English? What indeed, we echo, having sought an English character in music and found no single one but rather hundreds, all typical, all at variance. If Dr. Bush widens the scope of his inquiry so broadly his findings will be valuable, whether conclusive or not. In the meantime we wait and the old question remains. What common English denominator connects three works heard last week, Holbrooke's Piano Concerto No. 1, Havergal Brian's Ninth Symphony, Rubbra's Seventh? For the life of me, I can discover none between the first two and only a very tenuous, impermanent relationship between the symphonies.

Listening to Frank Merrick's enthusiastic treatment of the Holbrooke concerto, than which there could have been no finer performance, one realised that this work is a perfect Edwardian period-piece, richly upholstered music, orchestrated with the utmost opulence and great magnificence of sound, harmonically Straussian, melodically cosmopolitan. Its tunes sounded like Tchaikovsky, Grieg, and Macdowell; an honourable ancestry and, which is most interesting, the begetter of so much that still furnishes the more plushy Palm Courts of today. It is a strange, paradoxical state of affairs that music such as this concerto, which sits comfortably ensconced within the narrow bounds of its own chosen period, looking back for ever to past enchantments, should yet be echoed in its sweet cadences among the tea-cups and cocktail glasses of seaside resorts where nostalgia is the one un-failing restorative.

Within twenty minutes of this we were listening to Havergal Brian's Ninth Symphony. It was as though we had been transported into another world; nothing comfortable about this music, none of the technical facility which caused Holbrooke never to put his foot wrong in orchestration and the carpentry of joining theme to theme. Brian's orchestration often sounded strange and his joinery not always finely dovetailed. Instead one had the impression of overhearing a man wrestling with his spirit, striving to get his thoughts expressed succinctly and succeeding beyond expectation in producing extraordinarily stimulating music. The most striking contrast with the Holbrooke concerto was in the fact that Brian's music looked forward. There was a fine hit-or-miss experimentation about it. Dangerous to set before the



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young? Maybe, but there is always the soothing chivalry of Holbrooke's concerto available for parents so inclined. Havergal Brian is meat for stronger constitutions, food for more adventuresome thought. They say he is never performed, more, that is, than once in a way. I wish I could have heard a repeat of this symphony, to clear my mind, to gain, I believe, more pleasure still and to enable the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and Norman Del Mar to improve further on their very commendable performance.

'The interweaving colour of two horns' is Edmund Rubbra's own telling description of the opening bars of his Seventh Symphony. That sound, as romantic and evocative as any of

Brahms' horn writing, sent me back in memory to the slow movement of Rubbra's Sixth, headed with a quotation from Leopardi. That was the first time, in my experience of Rubbra's symphonic music, that he had allowed a listener to be aware of the beating of his heart. On that warm tone-colour—was it because of the Leopardi in the sixth that one recalled here in the seventh Dante's *dolce color d'oriental zaffiro*?—the symphony was floated; an instance of the idea, newly entertained by Rubbra, that the themes of a symphonic movement may justifiably be presented in striking terms of orchestral coloration, thereby commanding the listener's attention by direct contact with his emotions. Once contact has been made, the mind can be

counted on to follow whatever subtleties the composer's thought may create. So it was here; Rubbra's thought grew in stature and intricacy as the work progressed through the richly developed first movement, the widely extended second with its two trios, the first of them a dance with a tune that might have come straight out of the *Orchésographie* of Arbeau, on to the final Passacaglia and Fugue that completed the design. It all made for exhilarating listening, reinforced by the clear, sensitive interpretation achieved by Rudolf Schwarz and the strong impact of the B.B.C. Orchestra's playing.

SCOTT GODDARD

[Mr. Dyndey Hussey is away and will be resuming his articles shortly]

## Puccini's First Step into Opera

By MOSCO CARNER

'Le Villi' will be broadcast in the Third Programme at 9.0 p.m. on Friday, April 11, and 9.10 p.m. the next evening

SUCCESS came to Puccini early in his career. The performance of his 'Capriccio Sinfonico', with which the twenty-five-year-old composer graduated from the Milan Conservatory in July 1883, brought his name to the notice of all musical Milan; and a year later his operatic first-born, 'Le Villi', was received with an acclaim such as the composer was, with the sole exception of 'Manon Lescaut', never to achieve again at the first production of any of his later world successes. After the *première* at the Dal Verme, Milan, on May 31, 1884, the critics appeared to vie with one another in showering the most laudatory notices on 'Le Villi', southern hyperbole reaching its height when one writer declared the young composer to be the equal of Bizet and Massenet. Moreover, what must be a unique case in operatic history—this work by a fledgling engaged, during its gestation and later, the active help and genuine interest of virtually everybody who was somebody in Milan's operatic world, from Ponchielli, his quondam teacher, Ghislanzoni and Ricordi, his later publisher, to Boito and Verdi. Indeed, 'Le Villi' elicited from *Jupiter tonans* a comment (in a letter to Arrivabene) which is worth quoting in full:

I have seen a letter speaking highly of Puccini. He follows modern tendencies of course but sticks to melody which is neither ancient nor modern. It seems, however, that the symphonic element predominates in him—though there's no harm in that. Only it is necessary to go warily in that direction. Opera is opera and symphony, symphony, and I don't believe in introducing symphonic passages just for the sake of giving the orchestra a chance to let fly.

Verdi, we see, was much exercised by this 'symphonic element' in Puccini though all it amounted to in 'Le Villi' was a descriptive orchestral intermezzo, only mildly symphonic, and a few interludes and postludes to the vocal numbers introduced by way of a quasi-psychological comment. What actually lay behind Verdi's stricture was his acute susceptibility and antagonism to certain new tendencies among the young school of Italian opera composers—their *wagnerismo* or, more generally, their *germanismo* to which he opposed the *italianità* of the native tradition; 'Otello' was to be his grand retort to the challenge from Bayreuth. But in retrospect it is far more in the choice of the subject than the musical treatment that 'Le Villi' may be said to reflect a strong if somewhat belated influence from the Germanic North.

For the libretto is based on a legend of the kind which, combining the supernatural with

the theme of expiation, proved so dear to the hearts of the early German romantics—Weber, Marschner, Spohr, and the young Wagner. It was Catalani who in his 'Elda' (1880), better known under its later title 'Loreley', initiated a short-lived vogue for such subjects in Italian opera, and Puccini followed suit with the legend of the Willis, presumed to be of Slavonic origin (according to Heine) and best known to us from Adam's ballet 'Giselle'. There is in fact little doubt that the undiminished success of the French work suggested to his librettist Fontana the choice of the same subject for Puccini whose opera, styled *opera-ballo*, contains a substantial ballet, too.

The action, set in the Black Forest, centres on Anna and Roberto whose betrothal is celebrated in Act I. Roberto then leaves for Mainz in order to take possession of an inheritance and while there yields—as the verses prefixed to the symphonic interlude, 'L'Abbandono', inform us—to the lure of 'a siren who seduces him in obscene orgies'. He forgets Anna, who dies of a broken heart. Her soul joins the Willis, the ghosts of brides deserted by their lovers, who at the dead of night waylay the faithless one and dance him to death—'Murder by Ballet', to use the parlance of the modern thriller. In Act II, Roberto returns and finds his end in this fashion.

What did Puccini make of this disarmingly naive story? The supernatural and eerie, on which German romantic opera thrived, signified little or nothing to the Mediterranean mind and it is, hence, small wonder that the composer's response to that aspect of the libretto remained conventional and unremarkable. Thus the ghost-maidens' ballet, 'La Treggenda'—'The Spectres' is a jolly tarantella, with echoes from Mendelssohn and Bizet, and as to the evocation of the atmosphere of a Black Forest village, Puccini contents himself with making his rustics distort themselves to an elegant waltz à la Délibes (in the scene of Anna's betrothal). Conventional, too, is the formal cut of the opera, still consisting of self-contained numbers and including such stereotypes as a *coro d'introduzione*, a *preghiera* and a *gran scena e duetto finale*.

As for the characters, Fontana presented the composer with no more than wooden puppets labelled soprano (Anna), tenor (Roberto) and bass (Guglielmo, Anna's father). All the more astounding therefore how much musical life Puccini was able to breathe into them, notably into the two lovers. This feat must largely be accounted for by the fact that the underlying theme of the tale happened to be one which,

as his later, mature operas were to show, struck deep into his psychology as a musical dramatist—the theme of love conceived as tragic guilt and unfolded in a pattern in which suffering and mortal despair constitute the driving force.

Anna is the first of Puccini's 'frail' heroines to die for, and of, love and her musical portrayal thus displays already the composer's typical blend of ardour with *morbidezza*, as witness her opening romanza: 'Se come voi'; though lyrical echoes from Thomas' 'Mignon' are here as audible as are Verdi's dramatic accents in Anna's final duet where she appears as a revengeful spectre. It is, however, Roberto who kindles Puccini's imagination to white-heat and nowhere to more striking effect than in his great *scena drammatica*, 'Ecco la casa' (Act II), a monologue extending to eighteen pages of vocal score.

None of Puccini's subsequent lover-heroes is limned on such a scale and in as many shades of anguish and passionate despair as is Roberto. Admittedly, here, too, the composer's indebtedness to Verdi and also to Catalani—in the melancholy B minor romanza 'Torna ai felici'—is patent, but no one but Puccini could have penned Roberto's prayer 'O sommo Iddio!', the first instance of those broken-backed 'weeping willow' melodies in the minor which form one of his most characteristic fingerprints. This prayer, in which the young composer speaks in his own, authentic voice, belongs to the type of themes which, terser and more supply articulated, will occur in his later operas at the point of the drama at which the hero or the heroine is confronted with final catastrophe—the Puccinian '*muio disperato*' situation whose latent symbolism appears to lie in an unconscious equation of Eros with Thanatos.

Yet over and above such detailed features and despite its immaturities, dramatic as well as musical, 'Le Villi' reveals a tone and temper which struck Puccini's contemporaries as something novel and individual—the reflection of *mestizia toscana*, that Tuscan sadness which he shared with Catalani but for which he found, even in this first operatic essay, musical equivalents at once more inspired and richer than we encounter in the operas of his fellow-Lucchese. Add to this an alluring freshness and spontaneity of invention and the irresistible impression that true theatre blood courses through its veins, and it is clear why 'Le Villi' was received with such an extraordinary enthusiasm. There was, certainly, no hyperbole in the hope expressed by the critic of the influential *Corriere della Sera* that 'Puccini may be the composer for whom Italy has been waiting a long time'.



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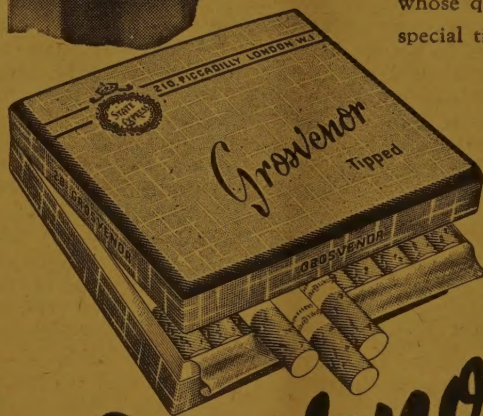
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# Broadcast Suggestions for the Housewife

## FIVE WAYS TO COOK CABBAGE

**FIRST**, cabbage cheese, which is similar to cauliflower cheese but, at the moment, cheaper. The shredded cabbage should be cooked till tender. Then drain it well, keeping the liquor. Make a good, well-seasoned white sauce (use half milk and half the liquor from the cabbage, flour, and fat, and stir into it plenty of grated Cheddar cheese). Pour the mixed cabbage and sauce into a fireproof dish, sprinkle with a little more grated cheese, and brown it quickly in a hot oven or under the grill. I garnish this with raw tomatoes or watercress.

If you like the taste of caraway seeds my second recipe will appeal to you. You need one cabbage, plenty of butter, half a tablespoon of caraway seeds, a little salt, pepper, and flour. Put the butter in a saucepan to melt. Add layers of raw, shredded cabbage, sprinkling each layer with some of the salt, pepper, caraway seeds, and flour so that the flavour is well mixed. Pour on a little boiling water and simmer with the lid on the pan till the cabbage is tender, stirring it once or twice and adding, if necessary, a little more water. This way of cooking cabbage gives a buttery, thickened juice.

Here is my version of an Irish method for serving cabbage. It is called colcannon, and is good and simple. Simmer a few tablespoons of milk in a closed pan with a little finely chopped or grated onion. Mash some freshly boiled potatoes into this and season well. Then mash again into this some thinly shredded cooked cabbage, heating it over the stove till it is really hot. Add some butter, and put an extra knob of butter on top of each serving.

Cabbage and apple is a good mixture, if you like the flavour of sweet and sour. The cabbage

is cooked with sugar and apples and vinegar. First, mix shredded raw cabbage and peeled and sliced cooking apple (I use one large Bramley for a medium-sized cabbage). Put this mixture into a saucepan with melted butter and seasoning, and just cover it with boiling water. Simmer till it is tender, then sprinkle into the cabbage and apples and liquor four tablespoons of brown sugar, two tablespoons of flour, and two tablespoons of vinegar. Stir it all over the heat for a few minutes to make 'cabbage in thickened sauce' before you serve it. You can use lemon juice instead of vinegar if you prefer.

Cabbage soup can be far more interesting than the name sounds. To make a cabbage soup for four people fry one small cabbage, shredded and with the tough parts removed, in butter till the cabbage is lightly browned. Then add a good dessertspoon of brown sugar and fry—stirring it—for a few moments longer. Pour on to this two pints of boiling stock (or use a *bouillon* cube dissolved in water). Season it well—I add a few whole allspice as well as pepper and salt—and simmer it for half an hour. To make a meal of it, say for supper, add to the soup some boiled new potatoes and some hot Frankfurter sausages cut into chunks.

LOUISE DAVIES

## A SIMPLE MENU

Stuffed cauliflower and layer fruit-pie: any mixture, either fresh or left-over, will do for the stuffed cauliflower, but sausage meat or minced pork is especially good. Tie a good-sized cauliflower in a pudding cloth or linen (to keep the shape) and parboil. Remove from pan, take off the cloth, put the cauliflower in a fireproof bowl and fill it between the flowerets with

seasoned meat. Sprinkle with grated cheese or a cheese sauce, put it in a moderate oven for about half an hour, or long enough to cook the meat. You should not need another vegetable, but fried croutons go well with it.

Tinned fruit is suitable for the layer fruit-pie, but either fresh rhubarb or sliced oranges are better. Put a layer of short, thin pastry on the bottom of a fairly deep-dish or flan case, cover with rhubarb and syrup (or sliced oranges or tinned fruit and juice), add another layer of pastry, another of fruit, then pastry—three layers in all. Brush over with milk and bake.

HONOR WYATT

## Notes on Contributors

MICHAEL BANTON (page 565): Lecturer in Anthropology, Edinburgh University

ANGUS MAUDE (page 567): M.P. (Conservative) for Ealing (South) since 1950; has been appointed Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*

EMANUEL LITVINOFF (page 573): critic and poet; author of *Untried Soldier* and *Crown for Cain*

J. B. CRAGG (page 575): Professor of Zoology, University of Durham; Member of Council of the British Ecological Society

CHARLES VERNON (page 577): Lecturer in Chemistry, London University

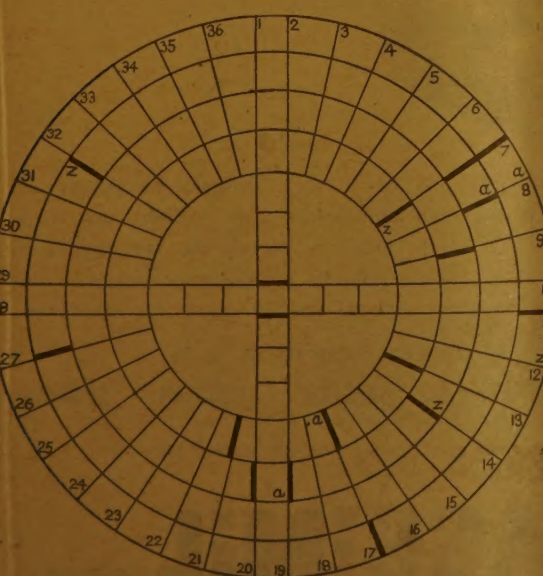
ERNEST GELLNER (page 579): Reader in Sociology, London University

WALTER ALLEN (page 583): novelist and literary critic; author of *Six Great Novelists*; *The English Novel—A Short Critical History*, etc.

## Crossword No. 1,453. Poetic Circles—V. By Pipeg

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Closing date: first post on Thursday, April 10. Entries should be on the printed diagram and envelopes containing them should be addressed to the Editor of THE LISTENER, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked 'Crossword' in the left-hand top corner. In all matters connected with the crossword the Editor's decision is final



Some part of each radial clue gives a word, or words (A), of the number of letters indicated after it. In each clue there is one other word (B), which is standing alone or is hidden in other words. The letters of the word (B) are to be deleted, in their normal order, from the word(s) (A), leaving four letters in each case. These letters are to be entered in the diagram along a radius from centre to circumference; except when R follows the number of the clue, then the direction is reversed. E.g. 'The luck of dicers is remarkable (8)' the word (A) is GAMBLERS, the word (B) is ABLE and the letters to insert are GMRS. In a few cases the two words (A) are not related to each other in any way.

The names of the poets from whose works the four quotations are taken are clued normally. The two eight-letter names have the same initial letter which occupies the central square. Each quotation, one from each poet, fills one circle, but the words do not occur in their normal order. As a help, the positions of the first and last words of each quotation are indicated by bars. First words start in spaces marked (a), last words in spaces marked (z). Words in the innermost and outermost circles read clockwise, in the other two, anticlockwise.

### CLUES

#### Poets' names:

1. He might make men sore, but you can arrange it better for him (7)
10. Put the unicorn's head, with a song, in place of a parrot's tail (8)
19. Go astray, with an American yokel around (7)
28. It may be dim there, but it is easy to see him (8)

#### Radical Clues:

2. You must not underrate the stories told (8)
- 3R. In these transactions we may fare well (7)
- 4R. The cane has a little hoop round it (7)
5. To train dogs to seek for the fox (4, 3)
6. If you pore over books your eyesight will, deteriorate (8)
7. Affected with a tumour, his neck was red (7)

- 8R. Ale is not good for one skilful in manipulation (7)
9. Cheap jewellery is made of it in Hagley Rd. (6)
11. We must not overrate fertilisers for the soil (8)
12. The lands of the manor-house have been closed (7)
13. Offered as a gift. It's apparent even to you! (9)
14. It needs a picture of a saint to urge on converts (4, 3)
- 15R. The vessels are made of clay (7)
- 16R. We enjoyed calm weather *en route* (6)
17. I contend that a small lace shawl gained favour (5, 3)
- 18R. French novelist unwell when chased by a bull (5, 3)
20. Is fish a brain-food? (7)
21. In one department of knowledge the Free State is sincere (7, 4)
22. Men without mates in the wide open spaces (8)
- 23R. The fate of free peoples known beforehand (8)
- 24R. Bound by some tie to an old-maid (7)
- 25R. Russian gala-dresses look strange in Aran (8)
26. Join with me to eat skate (9)
27. Ian has only taken a dram; be in suspense no longer! (3, 4)
- 29R. A species of butterfly found in the friary garden (10)
- 30R. Used to carry fodder for winter use (3-4)
- 31R. In a division of the Isle of Man, a household makes trenails (5, 6)
32. The opinion of one of the first explorers (7)
- 33R. Looking carefully into the profits of pig-rearing (7)
- 34R. He entertained his mistress with music ere the night ended (9)
35. He who locates the ambush may entrap enemies (5, 4)
36. Revolver sent to a fortress to meditate (5, 4)

## Solution of No. 1,451

A	W	A	S	H	I	N	G	T	O	N	P
R	A	S	H	F	C	H	A	R	A	I	
T	I	P	O	R	T	U	G	U	E	S	
H	A	R	D	I	N	G	E	M	I	T	R
U	B	A	D	G	E	E	P	A	N	I	C
R	A	W	I	A	N	C	O	N	G	E	E
W	M	I	E	T	T	A	L	E	A	R	M
I	A	L	A	E	A	T	K	I	N	T	O
L	E	A	D	M	A	D	I	S	O	N	
S	O	D	A	L	M	F	I	T	A	I	R
O	N	E	M	O	O	T	S	O	T	O	
N	E	I	S	E	N	H	O	W	E	R	E
G	A	R	F	I	E	L	D				

Prizewinners: 1st prize: G. C. Veysey (Ealing); 2nd prize: J. V. Boys (New Milton); 3rd prize: O. D. Barker (Brighon).

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

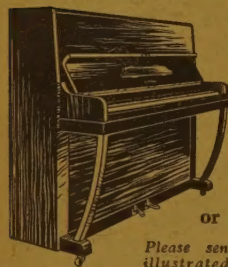


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